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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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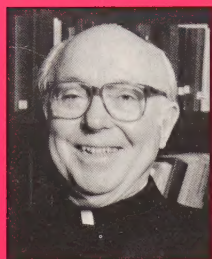
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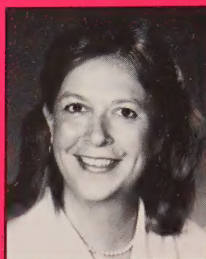
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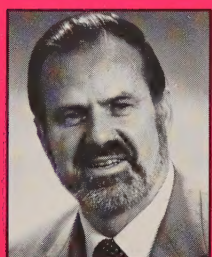
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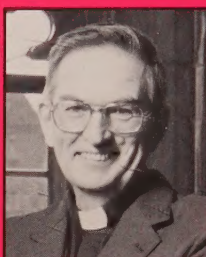
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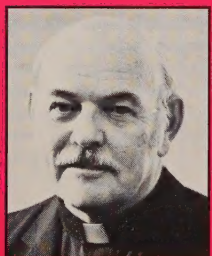
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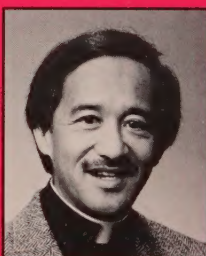
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Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, The Institute of Living, 400 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106. Copy should be typewritten double-spaced on 8½ × 11 inch white paper, 70 characters per line and 28 lines per page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 pages) with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be submitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black and white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Book reviews, which should not exceed 600 words in length, should be sent to the Book Review Editor, Jon O'Brien, S.J., D.O., Jesuit Community, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057.

Unaccepted manuscripts will not be returned unless requested and submitted with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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EDITOR'S PAGE

COLORADO CHOSEN FOR INSTITUTE

This is a big year for the people of Norway. Preparations for the Winter Olympics are progressing rapidly in Lillehammer, while athletes all over the world are stepping up their training programs and longing for a first look at Norway's breathtaking mountains and alluring fjords. Unfortunately, the media coverage of the sporting extravaganza will undoubtedly raise questions once again about how frequently and unethically Olympic contenders use anabolic steroids and other forbidden drugs to enhance their medal-seeking strivings. Winners are suspect. What a horrible state of affairs!

Norway is also celebrating this year the 150th anniversary of the birth of its most illustrious composer, Edvard Grieg. All over the country and in many other parts of the world the melodies of *Peer Gynt*, the Piano Concerto in A minor, and *Wedding Day in Troldhaugen* are gladdening the hearts of Grieg's ever-loyal fans. At a special exhibition in Bergen (Grieg's birthplace), visitors may view a film and photographs that feature his concerts, homes, friends, and colleagues in Norway and abroad; five separate music rooms give visitors a chance to hear high-fidelity recordings of his music. Norwegians are enormously proud of the man, but not unreservedly. They regard his themes as glorious, but his penchant for getting involved with women other than Nina, his wife, remains a source of some embarrassment to Norway's 95 percent Lutheran Christians, who would prefer that their musical champion had lived his private life in a somewhat more principled way.

But do the fans of public figures such as athletes, artists, and entertainers actually have a right to expect moral integrity from their heroes and heroines? This question has been raised often by media reporters and others in recent years in view of the astronomical salaries paid to stars whose off-court, off-field, or off-stage behavior is nothing less than scandalous. Parents frequently protest the most loudly; they are pained at seeing their children let down and disillusioned by so many of the glamorized objects of their hero-worship.

A comparable situation exists in our Catholic Church today. Saying "but they are only human" doesn't provide an adequate excuse for the notorious sexual misbehavior of the members of the clergy and religious congregations—behavior that has shocked and embarrassed so many young as well as old believers. Catholics expect faithful adherence to the church's standards for celibacy and chastity on the part of those they have respected and all too often pedestalized.

As I stated in the Spring 1993 issue of *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*, I believe that one of the principal reasons why so many priests and religious have so much difficulty living up to their vows is that most went through seminary and religious-congregation formation programs in which sexual issues were not squarely faced and openly talked about. Most formators have taken on their highly influential roles without any special training to prepare them to understand and converse about sexuality competently enough to help those in their care to comprehend their sexual nature, successfully control their sexual inclinations, and fulfill the responsibilities that accompany their commitment to celibacy.

We announced in our most recent issue that we are establishing, in response to this obvious need, an academic training program with a focus on sexuality for persons going into, or already engaged

in, the ministry of formation. In reply to our announcement, we received many encouraging phone calls and letters endorsing the project; commenting on its importance, timeliness, and uniqueness; and inquiring about its location. Some people wanted to sign up immediately; others asked for further information. We are grateful for the positive response expressed by so many of our readers in Europe and Australia as well as North America.

Our Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality will be situated in Colorado and operated by the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development in association with Regis University. Regis, with ten campus locations in and near Denver, is regarded as one of the most progressive of the twenty-eight Jesuit universities in the United States. Its administrators strive constantly to create programs that will be of service to students, the church, and the nation. Denver's proximity to the beauty of the Rocky Mountains, the famed hospitality of its citizens, and the accessibility of the city by air, bus, and rail should make Regis ideal as the

location for this exciting and urgently needed project.

Our Center is now engaged in a search for funding for this new institute. Surely, in a church that is paying out nearly a half-billion dollars to cover the costs of repairing—insofar as repairing is possible—the damage done by clergy and religious through sexual misbehavior, there must be some persons and foundations able and ready to help us financially to actualize this program at once. Again, we ask you, our readers, to assist us to find this funding in whatever way you can. We will be profoundly grateful for your helpful and prompt response.



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Information regarding The Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality may be obtained by writing to James J. Gill, S.J., M.D., at Regis University, P.O. Box 11250, Denver, Colorado, 80211-9998, or by phoning (303) 477-9350.

Prayer on a Friday Evening

The week has lasted at least three hundred years.
Its weight has knotted
the muscles of my neck and shoulders
beyond tautness to painful tenderness.

Empty things are supposed to be light—that is a lie;
the sheer weight of emptiness is crushing.
Oh, not that the days have been empty;
indeed, days and nights have been more than filled
with busy-ness of all sorts, from somber to silly,
much of it having more the character
of demand than invitation
—and, to be honest,
much of my response being more duty
than delight.
No, the emptiness is not that of inactivity
(that would be a different kind of challenge,
a welcome one at this point!).
The emptiness comes from looking back
at the end of day, the close of week,
and hearing a voice from deep within say,
So what?

The voice becomes a taunt
mocking the silence of these moments.
And I will not chase it away
with false cries of how important it all has been,
how worthwhile,
and I am grateful (where did that come from?)
for my inability to lie to myself.

Another voice is heard.
Outside, fluttering at the feeder,
the birds have arrived for their evening snack.
Their chirping stirs a message
About not spinning or toiling or gathering into barns
and, for all of that,
being worth *something*, anyway.

Lord, could I not be more like them?

—Reverend J. Patrick Foley, Ph.D.
Sacramento, California

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Recently, I attended an open meeting of folks who directly or indirectly had been affected by the devastating consequences of sexual misconduct on the part of a priest. Besides the expected and catastrophic issues of pain, rage, and demand for church action (e.g., therapy and remuneration for the victims, punishment for the offender), there were two surprising developments.

The first and less important was the conclusion that the offender (priest or religious) not be dismissed from active ministry. Rather, these people felt that he or she should be returned to supervised ministry after the satisfactory completion of therapy with a favorable report. Their reasoning was that if the offender were dismissed from the priesthood or order, there would be no one to keep an eye on the offender, who would thus basically be free to continue with his or her sexual addiction. (They seemed to have minimized or even overlooked the customary legal sanctions: registration as a sex offender, restrictions on future employment, etc.) Keep the offender, then, in a safe and virtually guarded environment.

This seems reasonable and commonsense. But in practice this opens the door to a much larger issue—the reassessment of vocational choice. Religious life (priesthood, too) and its inherent structures are a given for the professed members in an order or congregation; they are basically not going to change in a profoundly significant way.

So perhaps at this time the more relevant and somewhat devastating question facing the rehabilitated offender actually becomes, “Is it realistic and possible for me—knowing the boundaries placed upon me—to be able to make satisfactory progress and ‘work my aftercare program’ with any degree of success within this traditional framework?” A frank appraisal and the exploration of appropriate alternatives may be more to the point than a discussion of supervisory care within an already existing ecclesial system that admits of little adjustment.

But of much more importance at that meeting

was a subject that was completely ignored: the falsely accused cleric or religious. This is the flip side of the coin and must be addressed.

To be sure, the folks were engrossed with their own pain—and that is absolutely understandable. But the unreflective and even debonair ease with which they publicly (and recklessly) bandied about the names of people rumored to be *possible* offenders was appalling and, from an objective stance, morally irresponsible.

I asked myself later, Did they have any awareness of what the accused but innocent person also encounters? Just one false allegation can ruin that person, even though he or she may subsequently be fully exonerated in the eyes of the law.

Think of the almost routine steps that are taken in a truly “hyper” and perhaps overly reactive society: the allegation is made, and the supposed offender may be immediately placed on administrative leave and forced to go through multitudes of tests, and, in today’s climate, is basically and overtly presumed guilty until proven innocent. His or her suffering is as acute as that of many victims: abandonment, loss of self-esteem, shame.

Regardless of the outcome, the accused—just as surely as the victim—will never be the same again. He or she may well be tempted to join the ranks of many dedicated persons in, for example, the medical community, who leave their beloved profession because they are at the mercy of anyone’s allegations: “It’s just not worth it.” The risk is too great: “Who needs it?”

It is time that we begin to pull in our claws and walk prudently, cautiously, in the public forum. Witch hunts must not replace calm and deliberate investigation, which requires confidentiality. Even in courts of law, confidentiality is essential and ceases only when an indictment is delivered.

But precisely here is the most sensitive and emotionally overcharged issue: the mistaken belief that secrecy and confidentiality mean exactly the same thing.

With good reason people have blamed church authorities for covering up things that should be

brought to light. That's an aspect of secrecy—the suppression of information that is vital for a proper judgment. And that's wrong.

Confidentiality, on the other hand, protects the good name of both the victim (who often does not want his or her name revealed) and the accused offender (who may be innocent) until the facts are (a) established, (b) sorted out, and (c) properly interpreted. This is especially pertinent in the not-so-rare cases in which people (including wives and children) use allegations—threats—as weapons of power and control.

Actions, for example, can sometimes be ambiguous and need to be interpreted. Take the case of the priest who puts his arm around an altar boy after mass and in public: is this “preabuse behavior” or a universal sign of good will?

Attorneys-at-law are quite aware of this kind of ambiguity, and they walk cautiously. They are not unlike football referees who withhold their decision (despite the dramatic claims of both sides) until the pileup unravels and the real ball carrier is identified. Screaming players are neither neutral nor detached, and referees are not swayed by the amount of clamor going on around them.

Granted, there may seem to be a thin line between secrecy and confidentiality, but it is nevertheless a crucially important line whose vigilant and uncompromising maintenance makes the difference between an honest investigation and a witch hunt.

The bottom line is this: Walk quite cautiously when an allegation of sexual misconduct surfaces. The facts may well not be all that they seem to be. Certainly, there must be an impartial investigation, but the parties involved have a basic moral right to their good names, be they the supposed victims or the accused perpetrators. Only the protection of confidentiality can bring the true facts forward.

—Rev. Warren J. Rouse, O.F.M.
St. Mary's Basilica
Phoenix, Arizona

To the Editor:

Browsing through the Winter 1992 issue of *HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*, I found my attention drawn to the article “Governance in Religious Congregations” by Sister Catherine M. Harmer, M.M.S., Ph.D.

I find this article emblematic of so much unhealthy secularization which is and has been occurring in religious communities of men and women since the time of the Second Vatican Council. It is built on unscientific and unchallenged assumptions which characterize preconiliar religious life and governance as “hierarchical” and the desired mode for the present day as “organic.”

The article is from beginning to end a caricature which proposes as facts hypotheses which are products of the author's arbitrary historical, sociological, philosophical, and theological interpretations. For instance:

- “The hierarchical model [of governance] was created by Julius Caesar” (p. 35).
- “The [hierarchical] model assumed that most people were dangerous to the leader and that there had to be layers of insulation between the leader and the populace” (p. 35).
- “The word *authority* comes from the Latin root *auctor*, meaning creator. Thus, in a hierarchical model, those at the top create all things and send them down to those below” (p. 36).
- “This principle [of subsidiarity] was known at least as early as Thomas Aquinas, and probably much earlier” (p. 36).

Her only nod to the Second Vatican Council's teaching is to episcopal collegiality, which she attempts to apply to religious life without further qualification. She totally ignores *Perfectae Caritatis* and the subsequent documents of the Holy See on the authentic renewal of religious life. But then, she also ignores the entire tradition of monastic and religious life in the church. Her blithe assumption is that

the hierarchical model is basically a familial model based on the concept that some members are adults, or parents, and that others are children; that some are better educated than others and thus more able to take part in governance; that some are superior and some are inferior. The hierarchical model is elitist at its core. It seems to me, therefore, that it is no longer appropriate for religious congregations. (p. 38)

What ignorance of the scriptures and the foundational documents of Catholic religious life, such as the Rule of Saint Benedict, the Rule of Saint Augustine, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus! What “hierarchical” arrogance she manifests! What is even more upsetting is to discover that this religious, who never makes a reference to God or Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit in her article, is occupied as a “consultant and facilitator to religious congregations and health systems in the United States, Asia, and Africa”! I do not hesitate to say that her work is a matter not of instruction or evangelization but of disorientation. I would like to hope that your journal would dissociate itself from revisionary articles of this type.

—Augustin Cardinal Mayer, O.S.B.
Vatican City, Europe

Preventing Impairment in Ministers

Len Sperry, M.D., Ph.D.

The Chinese character for *change* is composed of the symbols for *crisis* and *opportunity*. When it comes to the matter of impairment in ministry, it seems incredible that there could be any opportunity amid the anguishing crises that the church faces today. Yet I would submit that truly effective church leaders should be thinking and acting along the lines of possibilities and visionary leadership rather than simply focusing on damage control and crisis management. This article briefly defines and describes the concept of visionary leadership and addresses its application to one particular type of impairment in ministry: sexual misconduct of clergy and religious.

IMPAIRMENT IN MINISTRY

Impaired functioning needs to be distinguished from normal and distressed functioning. A distressed minister is an active, functioning member of a diocese or religious community who is unable to consistently function well in his or her ministry because of various internal and external stressors. An impaired minister, on the other hand, is unable to function in ministry because of a debilitating medical condition or a dysfunctional pattern of behavior that reflects a lack of "fit" or a negative interaction between a predisposed minister and his or her assignment in a given diocese or province. While distressed ministers experience fears and anxieties, fluctuating moods, burnout symptoms,

job dissatisfaction, and doubts about career and vocation, impaired ministers experience manic-depressive illness, major depressive disorder, psychosis, alcoholism or drug addiction, and sexual disorders.

DETERMINANTS OF IMPAIRMENT

For the most part, ministry impairment is understood and explained as a personal deficit or defect in the individual minister. The impairment-prone minister is generally believed to have a nervous disposition or to never have really learned to cope well. The clearly impaired minister is often thought to have had a traumatic childhood, a dysfunctional family background, or a family history of alcoholism or mental illness, and to have totally failed to cope with life's stresses. Many, if not most, religious superiors and those in episcopal governance subscribe to this view; so do some mental health professionals. However, others believe that distress and impairment are as much a function of institutional structure, culture, leadership style, and the individual minister's theology of ministry as they are of the individual's physical and psychological vulnerabilities, coping skills, and specific stressors associated with his or her ministry.

In this view, impairment can be determined and predicted according to the degree of fit among minister, institution, vocation, and assignment.

Minister refers to the individual's strengths and vulnerabilities regarding physical health, personality structure, and self-esteem, as well as the impact of heredity, early childhood experiences, and family influences. It also refers to the individual's health beliefs and behaviors concerning weight, diet, sleep, exercise habits, and coping skills.

Institution refers to the structure and culture of the individual's diocese or province. These include the degree of role clarity or ambiguity; the system of rewards, sanctions, and control; and the organizational culture. This culture reflects a particular image of God, as well as beliefs about the goals and purposes of ministry.

Vocation refers to the way the minister views professional roles, responsibilities, and expectations in light of his or her call to ministry and theology of ministry.

Assignment refers to the specific stressors, job demands, and expectations of one's ministry, as well as the support system and benefits of a particular ministry. It includes the minister's perceived sense of control and decision making regarding job demands, and the degree of job satisfaction. A good fit can buffer a minister with some coping-skill deficits, while a poor fit could conceivably distress or otherwise impair a high-functioning individual.

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

Today the business and management literature is inundated with articles and books on leadership, particularly visionary leadership—the action of the leader who takes charge and makes things happen, who dreams and then translates those dreams into reality. According to Burt Nanus, author of *Visionary Leadership*, the roles of direction setter, change agent, coach, and spokesperson define the job of the visionary leader. Nanus, a professor of management and director of the University of South Carolina's Leadership Institute, provides the following formula for successful visionary leadership: shared purpose (vision and communication), plus strategic thinking, plus appropriate organizational changes, plus empowered people.

So what does visionary leadership have to do with preventing distress and impairment in ministry? Everything! Let me explain the connection in terms of the current crisis involving sexual misconduct by clergy and religious.

RESPONSES TO CRISIS

There are at least four different types of responses that episcopal authorities can make to this crisis. The first type basically involves denial: re-

fusing to investigate, minimizing, or ignoring the problem, or blaming the victim. The second type of response involves various reactive initiatives, such as setting up review commissions, establishing policy statements, ensuring that treatment is offered to victims, or advocating the laicization of perpetrators. The third type of response involves proactive and/or preventive initiatives. Examples of such initiatives include the guidelines for seminary training, covering celibacy and human sexual development, in the 1982 National Council of Catholic Bishops' (NCCB) document *Program of Priestly Formation*, and the recent establishment of the Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality by James Gill, S.J., M.D. The fourth type of response involves initiatives based on strategic planning and principles.

Strategic planning is a process in which the leaders of an organization or institution envision its future and develop the necessary goal and procedures for achieving that future. Strategically managed organizations have clearly articulated and appropriated vision or mission statements that galvanize members' commitment and guide their efforts in accomplishing the organization's goals. By definition, strategically emerged organizations are visionary and proactive rather than crisis-oriented and reactive.

Organizations vary in the degree to which they are strategically managed and led. In *Archbishop: Inside the Power Structure of the American Catholic Church*, Thomas Reese, S.J., states that episcopal governance is "primarily reactive and not proactive" and typically engages in crisis management. He observes that while some archdioceses have developed mission statements and pastoral plans, few do strategic planning, and most episcopal decision making is incremental (short-term and crisis-oriented) rather than comprehensive (long-term and future-oriented). Reese also notes that "[when] planning is taking place, it is usually in response to a perceived crisis such as the decline in the number of priests."

What is the vision and mission of the American Catholic church? Do most of its members know and understand its mission statement? Are their thoughts, decisions, and behaviors guided by its mission? The answers, most likely, are unclear, no, and no. Herein, I believe, lie the core problems. As the psalmist says, "Without a vision the people perish."

Some would agree that when society is relatively stable and unchanging, the missions of primary social institutions do not have to be explicitly stated, because everyone knows what the church is about, what the family should be, and what community government stands for. However, in times of rapid change and increased complexity and instability, institutional missions change and need to be clearly articulated. Reese argues that since

Vatican II, bishops have had to face a more complex and constantly changing environment—and, lacking consensus on goals, and lacking certainty on effectiveness, bishops have found themselves in the worst possible position in regard to what have traditionally been considered rational decisions.

Reese contends that one reason episcopal leaders favor incremental planning over comprehensive and strategic planning is that they lack sophistication in the social sciences. I contend that political realities and economic necessity could reverse this view. The need for a proactive leader using visionary leadership skills has never been more evident than it is today.

But is visionary leadership compatible with Christian organizations? It could be argued that Jesus exemplified the best of visionary leadership. The ministry of Paul clearly indicated a visionary leadership. The same could be said of many founders of religious orders, as well as the first bishop of the United States, John Carroll. The recent biography of Ignatius of Loyola by William Meissner, S.J., implies that the founder of the Society of Jesus was a master of visionary leadership.

PREVENTION OF IMPAIRMENT

Visionary leadership would not have permitted the sexual misconduct situation to escalate into its present crisis proportions. Using Nanus's formula, let's look at how visionary leadership could now be applied to ministry to prevent further and future impairment.

Shared Purpose. The first priority would be to articulate clearly the overall vision and mission of the American Catholic church and the specific roles of both clergy and religious in achieving that mission. The meaning of celibacy would also need to be articulated. The vision would need to be shared and discussed at the grass-roots level to foster commitment to it.

Appropriate Organizational Change. Next, the various levels of the church's organization would be examined for the purpose of reconfiguring structures, cultures, and leadership styles to support and ensure accomplishment of the mission. Obviously, this would be a major undertaking and would start at the points of greatest need. Regarding sexual misconduct, several commentators note that the church's culture of secrecy probably perpetuates sexual misconduct. Richard Sipes, in *A Secret World*, suggests that "there is no other single element so destructive to sexual responsibility among clergy as the system of secrecy that has both shielded behavior and reinforced denial." He describes this culture or system of secrecy as "partially in the service of confidentiality necessary for

the individual's growth, but it is also in the service of 'not giving scandal', thus sealing institutionally the system into a mode of operation that perpetuates the very problem it is designed to eradicate." Furthermore, this system defines "any sexual problem" as "acts" isolated from their developmental and relationship implications, thus equating incidents with sin. The sin is submitted to the system of secrecy; it is then "forgiven" or "forgotten" with minimal awareness of the relationship of the behavior to the person and his or her responsibilities. Visionary leadership would modify the institutional culture accordingly and quickly. Furthermore, the crisis-management style of episcopal leadership and the emphasis on short-term incremental planning would be replaced with long-range strategic planning.

Strategic Thinking. Essentially, strategic thinking is a way of conceptualizing problems and their solutions, as well as considering all decisions in light of an organization's mission and goals. Strategic thinking reduces vague and muddled thinking and wishes. When episcopal leaders and ministry personnel practice strategic thinking, they might consider how Jesus would act and respond in a given situation. When the matter of sexual misconduct is considered, seminary and formation personnel could discuss ways of implementing guidelines on training candidates about celibacy (e.g., the NCCB's *Program of Priestly Formation*; Gill's Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality).

Empowered People. As Nanus writes, when "people buy into the vision, they possess the authority, that is, they are empowered to take actions that advance the vision, knowing that such actions will be highly valued by all those who share the dream." Empowerment is frequently discussed among ministry personnel but less often demonstrated, probably because episcopal leaders are not convinced of its value or are afraid of its impact. Nevertheless, visionary leaders empower individuals, and these individuals respond with effective, responsible behavior. When Catholic ministers and the people they work with are empowered to form their consciences and expected to act respectfully and responsibly, sexual exploitation will be reduced or eliminated.

Does application of the visionary leadership formula and principles seem unrealistic and unlikely to be achieved in the American church? Or, if it seems possible, how long would it be likely to take? In most organizations, including religious ones, it usually takes two and a half to five years to make the transition from a traditional to a visionary mode of operation. This is the case even in large multinational corporations; the process might be expected to take just as long in a diocese or province.

The church has a choice: to continue in its current crisis-management mode or not. No single policy change, program, or institute for the study of sexual conduct—no matter how proactive—can change individual behavior in an institution that significantly affects what its members think, feel, and do. An impaired religious institution largely shapes the impaired behavior of its ministers. To really reduce or prevent impairment, both individual and institution must change.

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Ways of Coping with Anxiety and Tension

The National Mental Health Association offers in its brief but practical pamphlet "How to Deal with Tension" a list of things a person can do to keep feelings of anxiety and tension under control. The authors initially acknowledge that these emotional reactions are an essential function of living, like hunger and thirst, and they serve as self-protective reactions when we encounter threats to our safety, well-being, self-esteem, and happiness. Among these threats are violence, accidents, illness, financial trouble, and problems at work and in family or community relationships.

The writers provide an array of questions that are helpful in giving recognition that one needs to learn to deal with his or her life situations more effectively. Among these questions are:

- Do minor problems and disappointments upset you excessively?
- Do you have trouble getting along with people, and are people having trouble getting along with you?
- Do the small pleasures of life fail to satisfy you?
- Are you unable to stop thinking of your anxieties?
- Do you fear people or situations that never used to trouble you?
- Are you suspicious of people or mistrustful of your friends?
- Do you have the feeling of being trapped?
- Do you feel inadequate, suffer the tortures of self-doubt?

For the person who replies "yes" to most of these questions, the pamphlet suggests some possible ways of coping. They include:

1. *Talk it out.* Don't bottle it up. Confide your worry to some level-headed person you can trust. Talking things out helps to relieve your strain, helps you to

see your worry in a clearer light, and often helps you to see what you can do about it.

2. *Escape for a little while.* Lose yourself in a movie or a book or a game, or take a brief trip for a change of scene. Be prepared to come back and deal with your difficulty when you are more composed, and when you and others involved are in better condition to deal with it.
3. *Work off your anger.* Rather than lash out at someone, turn away and engage yourself in some physical activity like gardening, cleaning out the garage, carpentry, or some other do-it-yourself project. Or work it out by playing tennis or taking a long walk.
4. *Do something for others.* If you feel yourself worrying about yourself all the time, try doing something for somebody else. This will take the steam out of your own worries and replace them with a feeling of having done well.
5. *Give the other fellow a break.* Don't feel you have to compete your way through life, even while driving on the highway. Try to develop a cooperative attitude for a change. That can make things easier for you. If others no longer feel you are a threat to them, they can stop being a threat to you.
6. *Schedule your recreation.* If you are among those persons who drive themselves too hard and allow themselves too little time for recreation—a program destructive of mental and physical health—set definite hours when you will engage in some form of recreation. Choose a hobby or other activity you can throw yourself into completely and with pleasure, forgetting all about work.

The National Mental Health Association's pamphlet can be obtained by writing to the NMHA at 1021 Prince Street, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314-2971.

New Religious Movements

Gerald A. Arbuckle, S.M., Ph.D.

On the night of October 28, 1992, thousands of people in Korea (and smaller numbers in Australia and elsewhere) assembled to await the end of the world at midnight. This was not the first phenomenon of its kind, nor will it be the last. Anthropologist Alfred Haddon, writing over seventy years ago, tells us why this is so: "An awakening of religious activity is a frequent characteristic of periods of social unrest. The weakening or disruption of the old social order may stimulate new and often bizarre ideals, and these may give rise to religious movements that strive to sanction social and political aspirations. Communities that feel themselves oppressed anticipate the emergence of a hero who will restore their prosperity and prestige." He continues, "Phenomena of this kind are well known in history, and are not unknown at the present day among peoples of all stages of civilization."

Haddon's analysis not only highlights the reasons behind the millenarian movement cited above; it also summarily pinpoints the causes, and some of the qualities, of a wide range of contemporary socioreligious phenomena in Papua New Guinea (cargo cults), Japan (the New Religions), Islam (Islamic fundamentalists), India (Hindu militants), Peru (the Shining Path), Africa (the independent churches; the new fundamentalist-pentecostal churches), and Western societies (the New Age movement; Unificationism [the Moonies]; Scientology; various expressions of restorationism

and fundamentalism within the Christian tradition). Contemporary communication technology permits these movements to spread with remarkable speed, even from continent to continent, when socioeconomic conditions are right.

In this article I explain in some depth the causes and qualities common to movements like the above, despite their complexity and variety. I later focus on what are generally called the new religious movements (sociologically termed sects or cults). The expression refers to distinctive groups (e.g., adherents of Krishna Consciousness, Transcendental Meditation, Scientology) that became particularly prominent in the Western world in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They have their counterparts throughout history, as I will note, but I am concerned primarily with articulating the distinctive reasons for the dramatic rise of these movements in our time. The article ends with some pastoral considerations.

REACTING TO CHAOS

The formation of movements such as those Haddon describes results from a dramatic or revolutionary cultural breakdown. Cataclysmic change destroys people's security and unsettles their convictions. Culture, with its inner network of symbols, myths, and rituals, provides at the deepest level of our being a sense of belonging, security,

and direction. Culture keeps at bay what we most dread: chaos, or the radical breakdown of order.

Thus, if this network or experienced meaning system is drastically disrupted, even for reasons we assent to intellectually, we are apt to be thrown into cultural and personal chaos at the feeling level. Among the symptoms of chaos are a sense of loss and drifting without clear goals, depression, and anger. There is a search for people to blame for the chaos (technically called scapegoating or witch hunting). The blaming of others for misfortune represents the deepest and commonest expression of our irrational fear of others and of change itself. Our tendency, in the midst of affliction, is not to form a community of compassion but to take out our rage on one another. There can also be a yearning for someone or some agency to "get us out of this mess" (called messianism). People cannot cope with widespread chaos alone, so they come together to demand the return of clearly defined, predictable boundaries and order, so that their lives will again have meaning and direction. Thus, new social movements are born, or old ones revitalized, as a response to fear-evoking chaos. Commonly, the greater the chaos, the more simplistic—even authoritarian—the solutions.

SEEKING ULTIMATE MEANING

Haddon refers to such new movements as "religious," by which he implied that they involve a patterned system of beliefs and practices that relate people to the ultimate meaning of life. A religious movement provides for its adherents what they perceive as the ultimate answer to life's problems. Hence, the ultimate source of meaning may be found not only in divine revelation but also in such things as the accumulation of material things, the restoration of health, and political or economic power. As Jesus reminds us, "Wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too" (Matt. 6:21). Religion thus understood is about the salvation, redemption, or re-creation of people according to the values that people believe give significance to their lives. Consider the following examples from widely different societies illustrating how people have identified their unique visions of a new heaven and earth.

Immediately after World War II in Japan, a number of new religions developed in reaction to the widespread political, economic, and socio-cultural chaos. They particularly attracted followers who were experiencing anxiety, disease, or material deprivation. Beginning about 1955, when the Japanese economy started its powerful expansion, new religiopolitical movements (e.g., Sōka Gakkai and Risshō Kōsei Kai) offered their adherents, who were politically, economically, and socially alienated by the rapid development in Japan, precisely defined ways to cope with the change.

They reaffirmed traditional cultural values but introduced new qualities, such as the possibility of lay evangelization, and thus broke down the normal distinction between the sacred and the profane. They drew powerful support from people who felt that the traditional religions had ceased to be in contact with the real-life issues that deeply concerned them: having a sense of identity and belonging and self-worth, and having the ability to survive and grow in the new, anxiety-creating chaos of a rapidly changing urban society. Traditional religions, people believed, had become irrelevant to, or isolated from, what deeply worried them.

Many people of Tanna, on the tiny Melanesian island Vanuatu, in the South Pacific, have awaited for many years the return from the United States of the long-deceased John Frum, who is to inaugurate a golden age of plenty. The hope is that John Frum will bring with him American GIs who had been in Tanna during World War II, along with their cargo-laden Liberty ships. In one of the rituals to ensure that the cargo arrives, local men with the letters USA marked on their chests regularly hold mock military drills with guns made of bamboo. The John Frum movement, commonly referred to in the South Pacific as a cargo cult, is a reaction to the dramatic undermining of the people's culture, a consequence of contact over the last hundred years with the technologically more powerful Western way of life. One must get behind the bizarre features of this movement (and others like it) and recognize its causes and the deep aspirations of its followers. The movement is an attempt to adjust to the contemporary world through particularly traditional ways (e.g., the restoration of customary dress, ritual, and magic). The word *cargo* is a poor translation of the local expression *kago*. Included in the idea of *kago* may be such things as food, clothing, economic development, money, technological advancement, freedom from oppression, status, social justice—in fact, whatever is considered to be essential for the good life. In theological terms *kago* is a synonym for what we would call salvation or redemption. The people believe that through possession of *kago* a new person and a new people will emerge, equipped with a dignity equal to that of the white race.

In the late 1960s the sudden emergence of an unprecedented number and variety of new religious movements, both inside and outside the Christian tradition, was a reaction to the chaos of what Bernice Martin calls "the revolution of expressive (or cultural) disorder" of that period. The essential quality of a revolution—namely, its cataclysmic destruction of tradition-sanctioned ways of believing and acting—marked this extraordinary period. The cultural revolution began with a small group of radical thinkers and expanded to alter some of the most profound habits and values of Western society. Nothing remained unaffected: pol-

itics, arts, religion, education. It was a sensational attack on traditional boundaries, limits, certainties, taboos, roles, systems, style, form, and ritual. It was an endeavor to make ambiguity, or the uncertainty of chaos, not merely a passing feature of life but a way of living in itself. Inevitably, there was a widespread erosion of the legitimacy of traditional institutions: business, governmental, educational, ecclesiastical. These institutions were considered to have compromised, or prevented the realization of, values like freedom, sexual equality, self-expression, self-fulfillment, intimacy, belonging, the importance of personal experience in contrast to impersonal or abstract knowledge, concern for the environment, and the oneness of the relationship between the universe and humankind. No value or institution remained unchallenged.

However, we cannot live in cultural malaise, chaos, or normlessness for long. If we try to do so, then we fall into despondency and total despair. Revolutionary movements succeed only if they are able quickly to provide new structures that allow people to live with a sense of predictability and belonging. The expressive revolution was no exception. However, it contained a major paradox, or an inbuilt contradiction. On the one hand, there was a strong desire to cultivate individualism to an ever-increasing degree, along with a passionate commitment to immediate personal self-fulfillment, but without supportive structures. On the other hand, there was a yearning for the support of group life, as expressed, for example, through commune-style living and uniformity in antiestablishment clothing, hairstyles, and morality. Yet the group life was also to be unstructured (and therefore chaotic). The more counterculture devotees sought one emphasis or the other, the more they became exhausted and disillusioned by the constant cultivation of change and chaos. The much-desired personal peace could not develop, or, if it did, could not be sustained under a deluge of change. People felt the need to settle down and institutionalize or structure their drive for individualism or collectivity.

Thus, the postcounterculture sect/cult movements were born. With their clear visions and strategies and their neatly ordered boundaries, they provided the clarity and direction to support the unhindered pursuit of individualism or collective behavior. Either way, they offered salvation for the exhausted, rootless, and lonely, who no longer trusted existing religions (particularly the mainstream churches) or other structures to respond to their needs.

DYNAMICS OF SECTS

The chaotic upheavals of a revolution are commonly followed by one of four significant alternative reactions. The first is linked to the inescapable

New social movements are born, or old ones revitalized, as a response to fear-evoking chaos

fact that people cannot live in perpetual chaos. Continuous revolution has never been successfully attempted; Mao Zedong tried in China to sustain revolutionary momentum, but met with catastrophic results. Likewise, the 1960s counterculture revolution tried to maintain chaos as a way of life but failed.

Second, a counterrevolution can erupt when people endeavor to restore intact old values and traditional power structures. This reaction is illustrated by the conservative or restorationist political backlash following the 1960s cultural revolution (e.g., in the United States and Britain), with its banner cry of "back to the basics" and less commitment to civil rights and social justice.

The third alternative reaction to revolution is the formation of a new status quo around the new values and power structures. For example, the civil rights legislation in the United States was introduced, in part at least, in response to the counterculture's support of human rights.

The fourth reaction is the collapse of the revolution into populism of various kinds, disorder, or even dictatorship by individuals or groups if the new status quo cannot be sustained. Sects and cults flourish at this fourth stage, as became evident in the post-1960s counterculture period. People were too weary of ongoing change to support anything like continuous revolution.

Sects are minority ideological movements claiming an exclusive access to truth or salvation. Other distinguishing qualities of sects are leaders gifted with ability to propose convincing, simplistic alternative ways of getting out of chaos (e.g., Hitler and his "solutions" to the socioeconomic chaos of Germany of the 1930s; elitism and intolerance of di-

versity, expressed in moral and/or physical violence or anger against dissenters; inward-looking hostility or indifference to the contemporary world). In brief, in sects the boundaries and beliefs are identified with forceful, unquestioning, or ideological certitude. Cults are sects in milder dress.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SECTS

All sects have a millenarian quality to them, some far more than others. Adherents of millenarian or messianic movements (such as those that have flourished within Christianity, especially in times of social or religious turmoil) believe that change can be radical through the dramatic removal at a future date, by nonhuman intervention, of all that disturbs the status quo. The golden age lies ahead only for the devout followers. To demonstrate their authenticity or loyalty to such movements, followers engage in rigid withdrawal from contact with nonbelievers (e.g., family members), the visible destruction of property, or, in extreme situations, the marginalization or murder of those opposing the movements. In the John Frum movement, for example, it is believed that the golden age will come only when existing village systems have been destroyed and European money has been replaced by the new currency of Frum, the messiah.

Sects are generally fundamentalist in orientation; that is, they angrily reject dialogue with the contemporary world. For example, when fundamentalists (e.g., Islamic fundamentalists) react to the "polluting evils" of modernity, they assert that the world has gone wrong and that their task is to bring it back to the assumed golden age of a former period, even if this means using moral and/or physical violence.

At the risk of oversimplification, it is possible to identify two broad types of sects (popularly referred to today as cults) that emerged within Western societies in reaction to the chaos of the expressive revolution of the 1960s. These two types of sects are representative of the polar opposites in the revolution: individualism and group identity. In response to the need to exalt individualism and cope with the chaos, a variety of self-religions, or inner-directed movements, developed (e.g., encounter, therapeutic/holistic, and rebirthing groups; the New Age movement, in a variety of forms; Scientology), offering followers clearly defined, practical, "ready-to-wear" identities. These are the self-help sects, in which individuals, primarily through their own initiative, aim to restore and enhance their unique individuality and self-esteem.

The second type of sects are movements with a highly authoritarian, "this is the way it is" approach (e.g., the Unification Church, or Moonies). In such sects the stress on individual identity and self-direction or initiative gives way to the domi-

nance of, or imperative to conform to, the group-imposed identity. The individual's sense of belonging comes not so much from internal self-discipline as from submission to the insistent demands of the group. This removes from individuals the endless pressure to struggle for unique personal identities. Thus, both forms of sects offer their followers comforting reassurance within a chaotic world.

NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The New Age movement—populist, millenarian, and powerful—seeks to provide the structures necessary to ensure that various values of the counterculture are not lost (e.g., concern for the global environment, respect for individualism, material achievement, an inner feeling of well-being and self-worth, power to control oneself and the world). Even though this syncretistic movement is not as yet a clearly identifiable sect, its influence is the most pervasive of all the postrevolution movements today. The New Age movement affects many dimensions of life—literature, traditional religions (including religious life), politics, science, psychology, and medicine. Evil is equated with matters that cannot yet be controlled (e.g., forms of cancer, nuclear weaponry, patriarchal cultures). The movement is pantheistic, thus enhancing the dignity of every existing person and thing. We are God but are ignorant of this; our task is to overcome this ignorance, to allow the world's inner force (that is, God) to transform ourselves and the universe through healing processes (even successive reincarnation is a process of gradual healing); this will lead eventually to a totally new people and global society. As one exponent, actress Shirley MacLaine, says: "We already know everything. The knowingness of our divinity is the highest intelligence. . . . Free will is simply the enactment of the realization that you are God." Followers claim that these "facts" have been presented by the world's main religions and continue to be made known through particular spirits (e.g., Ramtha, Jesus Christ) and through instrumental consciousness (e.g., rebirthing and the use of crystals to lock into cosmic energy).

The New Age movement, a self-religion type of sect, is thoroughly optimistic in its faith in the potential of the individual to transform himself or herself by owning the divine power within. Chaos can be controlled and spiritual links with the entire universe and history can be achieved if the individual so wishes. Sin is simply the failure to use the opportunities to experience what it means to be God. The New Age movement is something of a modern-day adaptation of epicureanism, an ancient Greek philosophy that defined supreme pleasure as the absence of all sorrow. The New Age movement maintains that the happiness of the wise person lies in a life of effortlessness, of pleasurable

equilibrium achieved through a series of personal choices and self-discipline. It upgrades the role of experience to the detriment of reason.

IMPACT OF VATICAN II

Fundamental to our understanding of new religious movements is the basic cultural-anthropological axiom that any significant interference with a culture's creation mythology, even for the noblest of reasons, causes chaos—a high order of human drama in which people feel uprooted, lost, disillusioned, and angry.

That is precisely what happened as an inevitable consequence of the theological updating of Vatican II. The creation story that had evolved over several centuries to support a ghetto church culture was suddenly and radically changed. The Council called the church back to the purity of its Christ-given creation story: the church is to be a pilgrim people committed to be in the world but not of it, risking dialogue with the world in order to live out the mission of its Founder. Thus, a church culture of isolationism lost its powerful mythological foundation. To add to the confusion, the Council challenged Christians to go out and evangelize a world that was already experiencing a cultural upheaval, the intensity of which had not been matched for centuries. The combined impact of the Council and the counterculture revolution was, understandably, traumatic—and continues to be so—for millions of people.

Inevitably, by way of reaction to the cultural chaos catalyzed by the Vatican II revolution, a variety of sect and cult movements erupted within the church. These are marked by restorationist or fundamentalist qualities; that is, they seek to return the church uncritically to pre-Vatican II attitudes and structures. Theirs is a world of clear-cut contrasts: God/Satan, Christ/Antichrist, church/world, Christian/secular humanism. These movements, like all sects, seek scapegoats for the church's contemporary difficulties and for what they see as the church's acceptance of secular-humanistic values. Thus, they blame people who favor liberation theology and its concern for the poor, those who critique capitalism, people who use the social sciences as aids for evangelization, and supporters of the vernacular in the liturgy. Catholic fundamentalists ignore church teachings (e.g., papal social encyclicals) that highlight the need for people to be involved in social justice, preferring to concern themselves with matters of accidental consequence (e.g., rubrical or language changes in the liturgy). Paradoxically, though they fear the intrusion of the world into the church, they nonetheless use all forms of modern technology to make their restorationist message heard.

Millenarianism is frequently present within these anti-Vatican II movements. Not surprisingly,

a wide variety of cults have developed around supposed apparitions of the Mother of God (e.g., at Garabandal in Spain and Bayside in New York), and commonly, their message is the same: a return to traditional practices of the Catholic faith is necessary; the world is basically evil and to be avoided; divine chastisement is imminent if the "revelations" are not heeded. The Christian must be at war with Satan and his demons, who are to be found even within the church itself. Millenarianists claim support for their warlike language in Saint Paul's warning: "For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the heavens" (Eph. 6:12). In brief, we are to return to the pre-Vatican II church or face the consequences. Like all millenarian movements, these sects or cults commit themselves to destructive action (e.g., the condemnation of people who are involved in social justice campaigns based on Vatican II theology and the recent social encyclicals) as a precondition for the ushering in of the golden age.

However, fundamentalism and millenarianism are not diseases of the Right alone (e.g., the Lefebvre anti-Vatican II sect), because they can be found among people who intolantly condemn anything of the past as evil or contrary to Vatican II values. Back in 1968 Thomas Merton described what he called "cargoism" within the church—that is, the uncritical and ideological destruction of symbols of the past.

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

New religious movements are to be found everywhere, both inside and outside the mainstream churches. It is estimated that in Brazil over 600,000 annually leave the Catholic church for sects and cults. All these movements arise in reaction to the speed of change and the consequent alienation that people experience. New religious movements provide people with meaning and stability. These movements evoke strong emotional reactions, often because of well-publicized accounts of their outlandish claims or practices (e.g., prophecies about the destruction of the world; condemnations of the theology of Vatican II; brainwashing techniques; and, at times, tragic behavioral excesses, such as the 1978 mass suicide of 900 members of the People's Temple sect in Jonestown, Guyana, and the recent self-annihilation of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas). However, our emotional reactions to these movements must not stop us from learning from them.

Because sects form in response to the vacuum of meaning or the chaos that follows rapid change, it is of little use to confront them or their followers with their dogmatic weaknesses or what we might

consider to be their bizarre behavior patterns. People join a sect not primarily because of its belief system but because of what it claims to provide (e.g., experienced identity and meaning, instant friendship or a sense of strong community bonding, a vehicle for enthusiasm and energy, a way to overcome drug or other addictions, a way to express concern for global ecology, the promise of gaining control over one's life).

The fact that people leave the church for these movements, or attach themselves to anti-Vatican II sects within the church, dramatically highlights our failure to communicate the fullness of the gospel message of integral faith and justice. These sects challenge Christians to ask themselves certain questions: In the presentation of the faith and liturgies, is there an overstress on the role of reason, to the detriment of people's legitimate feelings? Are parish structures too impersonal, clerical, and patriarchal, inhibiting the emergence of authentic faith and participative communities? Is dialogue with people and their cultures acknowledged as an imperative of the gospel? Do peoples of minority cultures experience respect and justice within church structures? Is popular religiosity appreciated as a legitimate vehicle for people's relationship with God? The Puebla Document (1979) of the South American bishops contains a warning relevant to the entire church: "If the Church does not *reinterpret* the religion . . . the resultant vacuum will be occupied by sects, secularized political forms of messianism, consumptionism and its consequences of nausea and indifference, or pagan pansexualism." Christians have available to them a magnificent theology of the dignity of the human person, community, social justice, and concern for the environment. But people are not seeing particular beliefs being lived out to the degree they desire. The Christian churches require not more and more statements on how relevant they are to the needs of people today, but the concrete expression of faith-founded beliefs by church leadership at all levels.

In his still remarkably relevant 1950 book *Enthusiasm*, which analyzes the rise and decline of revitalization movements within the church, Ronald Knox notes that the church owes its long life to its institutionalization. However, he comments that this institutionalization can lead to pastoral inertia if the church lacks innovative spiritual capabilities that periodically erupt through particular individ-

uals (e.g., pastoral innovators or prophets like Saint Francis of Assisi; founders and refounders of congregations). These people are the pastoral leaders who, by their own imaginative and creative living out of the gospel, revivify or reinterpret the church's teaching in light of the changing needs of the times. As these pastoral pathfinders see their parishioners drawn away to new religious movements, they resist the temptation to restate the gospel with sectarian certitude in an effort to stop the drift. With Saint Paul they say, "Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

Knox ends his book with this challenge: "New things as well as old she [the church] keeps in her treasure-house. . . . But there is danger in her position . . . ; where wealth abounds, it is easy to mistake shadow for substance; the fires of spirituality may burn low, and we go on unconscious, dazzled by the glare of tinsel suns. . . . If we are content with the humdrum, the second-best, . . . it will not be forgiven us." New religious movements dare us to take this statement very seriously indeed.

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Mother-Daughter Conflicts Affecting Religious Life

Judith Ann Schaeffer, O.S.F., Ph.D.

It may appear as if the surest way to put an end to a mother-daughter conflict is to enter religious life, for the life-style of a sister offers well-established ways of reducing the amount of contact with one's mother. A woman religious can find a ministry at a great distance from home, so that visits home occur only rarely; she can put so much energy into her ministry that letters and phone calls can be respectfully brief; and she can include other community members in visiting time, "because they are now family," so that she and her mother are seldom alone.

Paradoxically, however, such maneuvers do not end mother-daughter conflicts. In fact, they may make them worse. When mother-daughter problems are given little conscious attention, they are less subjectable to corrective thinking, less noticeable, and therefore less demanding of psychic energy. Reducing the frequency of mother-daughter interactions makes them less causative of the heightened stress that serves for most people as a motivator for change.

In reality, women religious can no more claim immunity from conflictual mother-daughter relationships than other women, in spite of past rules that may have distanced them from home or present manipulations they may perform in order to ensure that they and their mothers lead "separate lives." Religious life, in fact, may well harbor more significant mother-daughter conflicts than married life. According to the research of Reva Rubin, married women who become mothers are

likely to work through their personal mother-daughter conflicts in the course of assuming their own maternal functions.

Women religious, on the other hand, are likely to avoid resolving conflicts with their mothers, and this often leads them to unhealthy attempts to work through those conflicts with other religious. Sisters may seek out relationships with women religious who resemble their mothers in some way, with the unconscious intent of restaging the mother-daughter relationship in an attempt to participate in a more satisfying drama of interpersonal love and nurturance than they knew in their family of origin.

FIVE CASE HISTORIES

It may be helpful to consider the stories of sisters with unresolved mother-daughter conflicts before examining the tasks facing these sisters if they are to resolve their conflicts.

Sister A, a warm but introverted woman, appears to form deep, meaningful relationships with other sisters and to share herself with those in her community. Over time, however, she becomes painfully disappointed in the behavior of those with whom she is intimate. She sometimes attempts to verbalize her disappointment, stating her expectations and pointing out how others have fallen short of them, but no one's efforts to satisfy her seem good enough. She discontinues these disappointing friendships and spends a significant amount of

time in isolation from both her latest intimates and the community in general.

In essence, Sister A never learned to resolve the conflict arising out of her longing for an ideal mother and her mother's imperfect mothering. The failure of others to meet her high expectations inevitably results in her withdrawal and rigid, self-imposed separation. If she cannot sustain merged attachment—bondedness to another by becoming that other and having that other become her—she feels compelled to reject separated attachment—bondedness to another while remaining herself.

Sister B, by contrast, is willing to settle for flawed relationships with other religious, as long as they provide the external approval needed to compensate for unavailable self-affirmation. Sister B makes sure she has at least one or two close relationships at all times, and uses her contacts frequently to unload her concerns, review her problem-solving attempts, and hear that she is loved and approved of, no matter how objectively successful or unsuccessful her efforts.

In essence, Sister B has never resolved the conflict she experienced with her mother as a result of her dependence on her mother for constant approval, and either her mother's indulgence of that dependence or her unwillingness/inability to satisfy Sister B's demand for that kind of caregiving. Sister B has learned neither to trust herself as her own primary source of approval and affirmation nor to process her anger over being either overprotected and indulged or slighted by her mother. She unconsciously substitutes anxiety for her anger, and feels a need to reduce that anxiety by hearing the reassuring words of her fellow sisters.

Sister C also experiences considerable anxiety, but hers results from her inability to tolerate feelings of guilt that result from simply being herself. Particularly when she is angry and expresses that anger in community life, she tends to perceive a reaction of displeasure in others, even though her expression has been appropriate. She interprets this perception of displeasure as a sign that she is guilty or wrong. As a consequence, Sister C engages in reconciliatory efforts as soon as possible, making sure she is understood and forgiven. Never having resolved her conflict with her mother over her right to be loved as well as to be free to express herself, Sister C cannot tolerate the uneasiness she experiences as guilt. Hidden deep in the recesses of her unconscious is the conviction that if she is herself, her mother will abandon her and she will be destroyed. She will thus cause herself to be destroyed by being herself. She feels guilty for being herself, she feels guilty for wanting to be free to be herself and wanting not to be abandoned. She is also anxious that at any moment she might prove her guilt.

Sister D, conversely, appears to disown personal guilt for anything she does; she blames others categorically for the interpersonal difficulties that arise routinely in her life. At times Sister D's reaction to feeling harmed by others is a rage that empowers her and fuels her characteristic self-righteousness. At other times her reaction is the constant expression of low-grade criticism of others, which casts an uneasy, depressive spell over the entire community.

Essentially, Sister D has never resolved her conflict over her mother's abusive use of parental power. At the same time, however, Sister D has never taken responsibility for her own abuse of power.

Sister E, an outwardly giving and generous woman in a position of authority, aggravates even dependent and subservient members of her community with her excessively mothering behavior. Becoming overinvested in numerous aspects of community life, she weaves her way into matters well within the capabilities of other sisters. She benevolently demands that others keep her informed in detail, rely on her for periodic approval, and give her the ultimate credit for the success of any work. Never having resolved her conflict with her mother over her need for independence and achievement outside family life and her mother's need for her to take on a maternal role early in life, Sister E continues to relate to other adults as a mother figure. This brings about in other sisters either conscious or unconscious resentment, buried under conscious guilt for not being properly dependent on authority.

A mother-daughter conflict remains alive in all these women, for none has resolved it by completing the daughter's universally required but very difficult task of individuating—that is, becoming her own person, cutting the symbiotic tie between herself and the woman who gave her birth.

INDIVIDUATION NEVER EASY

Individuation is no easier for the woman religious, in spite of her prayer life and life of vowed detachment from rights and possessions, than it is for other women. The mother image never dies in the psyche of a woman. It represents the hope for someone who will love unconditionally and nurture perfectly, meeting the profound expectation every human being holds, not only in infancy but throughout life.

One reason the task of individuation is difficult for any woman is that it requires her to form an identity separate from that of a person she has learned to emulate, a person she considers knowledgeable and at least minimally effective in her culture. She is called to devalue, get angry with, and rebel against her mother. It cannot be otherwise, as Simone de Beauvoir writes in *The Second Sex*, for "identity is shaped only in revolt against someone."

Another reason individuation is hard for a woman is that it challenges her to call into question her very role as a nurturer—one who is tolerant, patient, noncompetitive, and responsible for others, including her mother. It requires her to put her obligation to nurture herself ahead of her responsibility to nurture others. It requires her to take care of her own needs even if she fails to meet the needs of others. It asks her to deemphasize the role that gives her cultural value and meaning.

Finally, individuation is especially difficult for a daughter whose mother counted on her for her own fulfillment—for instance, the daughter used by her mother to replace her mother's unavailable or absent spouse or to compensate for the self-fulfilling career that motherhood precluded. A woman who was thus made a part of a marital system when she was still a child is so accustomed to role reversals that she truly believes her mother cannot survive without her strong emotional support.

In spite of the difficulty of individuating, however, the woman religious must undertake the task if she is ever to resolve the conflict with her mother and correct her dysfunctional relationships with her fellow religious. In striving for individuation, she must face the same emotional upheavals and learn the same new behaviors as other conflicted women.

SUBTASKS OF INDIVIDUATION

Developmental psychology theorists and clinicians, including Margaret Mahler, D. W. Winnicott, and others, have found that the task of individuation for a woman consists of the following subtasks: (1) giving up the ideal of a perfect mother and of being mothered unconditionally; (2) moving from merged attachment to separated attachment; (3) becoming truly dependent on internal approval and self-affirmation and processing the anger resultant from being loved too little or pampered too much; (4) learning to tolerate what feels like guilt after having been true to oneself; (5) learning to accept human limitations, processing the rage resultant from abuse, and appreciating the good done to oneself by others; and (6) curbing generosity toward others and becoming generous toward oneself, thereby combining self-in-relationship with self-in-the-world. A conflicted woman religious, then, is challenged to address one or more of the subtasks of individuation that lie at the heart of both her unfinished business with her mother and her dysfunctional relationship with her fellow sisters.

Sister A, for example, must focus on subtasks 1, 2, and 5, and be prepared to face deeply felt feelings of anger and depression. She may need the help of a professional to deal with the painful feelings of abandonment this realization brings: her mother was not and cannot (even if living) be the kind of ideal mother she always wanted. She must mourn

the loss of that ideal, feel and express the full impact of her anger, and submit to the reality that she can compensate to some extent for being abandoned by combining reasonable self-love with a limited but nonetheless sincere love of others. She can enjoy separated attachment only if she renounces her unrealistic hope of merged attachment.

One moves from merged attachment to separated attachment by replacing psychological fusion with nourishing connectedness in the context of autonomy—in other words, by replacing emotional dependence with emotional interdependence and a mutual support system. This can be achieved through the following steps: (1) identifying one's own unique needs and desires; (2) articulating them, especially to oneself but also to one's mother; (3) tolerating feelings of anxiety and guilt if one's needs and desires are opposed to one's mother's needs and desires; (4) taking primary responsibility for meeting one's own needs and choosing according to one's own desires, even when this meets with disapproval from one's mother; (5) getting support in doing so from persons other than one's mother; and (6) returning to one's mother and being open to the possibility of mutual support for meeting both persons' unique needs and desires. A woman thus moves from merged attachment to separated attachment by becoming the primary source of need fulfillment for herself and by relating to her mother as one of several secondary sources of need fulfillment.

Sister B, on the other hand, must focus on subtask 3; she must be willing to experience the anger resulting from being either overindulged or approved of too little. She must learn to tolerate, rather than give in to, her anxiety, and she must find out that going to others will reduce her anxiety only on a temporary basis. She must learn that she can survive on, and even benefit from, self-approval, even though she might feel unapproved of by others. She must overcome the fear that keeps her a virtual child, afraid to risk losing her mother's love, afraid to live alone emotionally and psychologically.

Sister C must focus on subtask 4. She must allow herself to incur what feels like guilt in tolerable doses and learn to live with whatever happens when she owns and expresses herself. Expecting to experience sadness and even depression, she must grieve over being shamed as a child whenever she was true to the self that her mother did not want to see. She must become an expert at distinguishing guilt (which results from violating her own moral values) from shame (which results from being devalued by others for reasons of their own).

Sister D will more than likely need professional help as she focuses on subtask 5: dealing courageously and patiently with depression over feelings of abandon-

ment and the rage it inspires. Because she was indeed abused and/or neglected by a trusted caregiver, she still feels the rage and deep sadness, even despair, that she felt as a child. What happened to her cannot be denied. The trauma and its psychological aftermath should be acknowledged and dealt with in a safe, psychotherapeutic environment.

If Sister D eventually confronts her mother to demand an explanation of why she was abused, neglected, and unprotected, she will probably hear her mother tell the story of her own abuse and neglect. She may also hear that her mother feared the loss of her lover or spouse if she dared to bond with, care for, and protect her child. Sister D must then learn to nurture and protect herself, accepting the fact that others will never meet her needs as fully as she would like.

In time Sister D may learn to break down the specific components of her mother's love, as Richard C. Robertiello (author of *Hold Them Very Close, Then Let Them Go*) recommends in Nancy Friday's book *My Mother/My Self*—that is, by separating the ways in which her mother loved from the ways in which she abused. Sister D may even begin to appreciate what her mother provided for her in those misguided but often benevolently motivated attempts to teach her skills for survival in a cruel world.

Sister D must also learn to face a reality even more threatening to her self-image than the abuse she once suffered: her present abuse of others. If she hopes to maintain the life-giving relationships she desires with other women, she must take responsibility for her part in the ongoing destructive cycles of abuse and neglect.

Sister E must focus on subtask 6, learning to use more discrimination in doing good for others and overcoming her fear of meeting her needs for achievement and power in impersonal or transpersonal realms (e.g., art, music, writing, athletics, computers, gardening). She will then truly become an empowerer of her sisters, recognizing their coadulthood and facilitating their growth toward full maturity. And she herself will become a truly well-rounded person, able to give as well as receive, and able to enjoy both self-determination and trust in the self-determination of others.

TRANSITION TO TRUE ADULTHOOD

Several common threads run through the individuation work of Sisters A through E and, indeed, characterize the resolution of mother-daughter conflicts for all women. In all cases the woman who has completed her task has transformed her self-image from that of a needy child, dependent on another for a sense of security and goodness, to that of an adult who can be interdependent, and even dependent at times, because she has learned to be independent. She can rely on others at secondary

levels of need fulfillment because she has learned to rely on herself at a primary level. She can ask others to contribute to the sustenance of her emotional life because she has given herself that life in the first place and continues to make a substantial contribution to its sustenance.

Furthermore, the woman who has completed the task of individuation has a firm-enough sense of self to be able to recreate the relationship with her mother to the extent that her mother is able and willing to do so. No longer dependent on her mother in her emotional life and able to forgive her for what she did badly, she can appreciate what her mother did provide. She can allow an expression of that appreciation to infuse new life into what was a life-destroying relationship. She can enjoy a friendship with her mother, or at least a pleasant acquaintanceship. She can even consider nurturing, as a mother would a child, a person whose experience of mothering was flawed at best.

In addition, the individuated woman has faced and processed her anger over imperfect mothering. She has called it what it is; she no longer fabricates a false inner harmony by ignoring facts or minimizing her emotional reaction to those facts. She has accepted the idealization of motherhood as an essential aspect of her life's history, processed the anger resultant from renouncing that idealization, and learned that life continues—even flourishes—after idealization is replaced by an acceptance of reality and of the limitations of all persons involved.

Finally, the woman who has completed her task of individuation can contribute to societal changes both by mentoring other women and by helping to transform the very definition of motherhood—freeing both men and women from sentimentalized and unrealistic expectations of the roles mothers or mother figures should play for them in adulthood.

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An Experience of God

Michael W. Cooper, S.J., S.T.D.

In the parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30–32, Matt. 13:31–32, Luke 13:18–19) Jesus gives us a wonderful image to help us understand the mystery of the Kingdom of God in our midst. For any number of Christians the mustard seed symbolizes the gradual development of one's faith life from small and even feeble beginnings to a thriving relationship with the Lord. For others the mustard seed images the gradual but assured development of the nascent Christian community, project, or ministry. However, in praying about the parable in the light of my own experiences and those of other Christians I companion in spiritual direction, I have become acutely aware of how the mustard seed also portrays our foundational experience of who God is for us, especially in times of devastating suffering and loneliness. After exploring this root sense of God for us, I will draw several parallels with Ignatius of Loyola's experience of God, especially as expressed in the often confusing images of the fourth point of the "Contemplation for Love," which closes the Spiritual Exercises.

We come to certain limit points in our lives, times when we feel that we just cannot take any more setbacks. For example, we may need to leave a job or a ministry (in less polite terms, we are fired or "let go"). We could fight back, but somehow that makes no sense. From our perspective, no real reason for this turn of events seems to exist; the decision seems to have come out of other people's

woundedness and darkness. We feel empty and powerless, and any efforts to resist seem futile.

Perhaps a deep and longstanding friendship falls apart for no apparent reason. Or an illness—cancer, multiple sclerosis, AIDS—hits us at the peak of life, or the operation on which we have pinned all our hopes does not work. Perhaps the irrationality and vulnerability of a midlife crisis or the physical and emotional rollercoaster of menopause destroys our once-vibrant way of doing things. Perhaps burnout kills not only our emotions and physical stamina but our dreams and hopes as well. Each of us can name personal examples of such death-dealing events.

Some of us experience not just one isolated fatality but a pileup; literally, one damned thing follows another. One door after another closes in our faces. Capital punishment would almost seem a blessing compared with this slow death of all that we hold precious and necessary. We simply cannot take any more.

In the midst of all this pain and chaos, we may run to therapy or analysis—not a bad thing in itself to do. But more profoundly, these crucifixions of the human spirit occasion a profound experience of God. Obviously, the Lord does not cause these events, and more often than not, he is as pained a witness to the suffering as we are. Yet God meets us there at the crossroads of these devastating events. Though psychology and spiritual direction are both

very helpful in healing our wounds, the real resolution comes from a radical experience of God.

The language of the mystics sheds light not just on our prayer but also on our lives. Such events crystallize the Dark Night, the purification and emptying of our interior and outer senses. This agonizing process, therefore, includes both the gradual emptying of the ego self—that unhealed center of defensive and protective control inside us—as well as the purifying of our thinking on how life should be in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The laborious surrender of ego control eventually gives way to a naked encounter with the Other. In this utter darkness, we stand stripped of anything to hold on to or to protect us. Nothing seems left or possible. The experience makes no sense. In the midst of this stifling emptiness there is no-thing, yet somehow God is.

In this night, when it seems that not even God can save us, we paradoxically feel drawn, and ultimately choose, to plunge more deeply into the abyss, to the only anchor we have: “Lord, into your hands I entrust my spirit. Lord, hold me in my grief.” After perhaps an eternity or an instant, we become aware of a quiet staying power. We realize that despite all that has happened, we are not diminished inside. The words of the prophet Isaiah (43:1–2) become the marrow of our dry bones:

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you;
or through rivers, they will not swallow you up.
Should you walk through fire, you will not be
scorched
and the flames will not harm you.

These consoling and empowering words become fertile ground for the tiny mustard seed of our renewed sense of God.

Finding ourselves on solid ground again, we can almost feel this seed of life germinating within us. The Lord is real—literally, the most real fact of our existence. The deadly reminders of the Dark Night still remain, but their power to inflict pain and confusion seems greatly dulled.

In the dawning light of the New Day we know that despite all the trials we thought we could never survive, we have not been scorched or swallowed up. The Lord has taken us into his protective care and little by little has filled our emptiness with his very self. Neither diminished nor destroyed, we begin to radiate the first glimmers of an astonishing fullness that is of God.

As these once very mysterious workings of God become clearer, we also realize that no matter how faint or strong, the Lord’s faithful presence has sustained us through all these trials. The words of the prophet Jeremiah (17:7–8) echo this newly confirmed sense of rootedness:

A blessing on the one who puts her trust in Yahweh,
with Yahweh for her hope.
She is like a tree by the waterside
that thrusts its roots to the stream:
when the heat comes it feels no alarm,
its foliage stays green;
it has no worries in a year of drought,
and never ceases to bear fruit.

This consoling word of divine strength heals our spirit while reminding us that the real fruitfulness of our personal and apostolic lives comes from the Lord.

Amid these powerful awakenings, we feel a growing freedom and wholeness that transcend the psychological. Though the human and the divine flow together, we just sense very deeply that the liberating labors of God’s Spirit are at the origin and foundation of all the healing that has occurred. In this atmosphere of deep spiritual freedom, we begin to see that we can—or, more precisely, that we are empowered to—let go of things we thought we could never get along without: certain relationships, a settled career or place of employment, success and accomplishment for all to see, health and long life.

These things still remain important and even essential and necessary in some way. Yet somehow we can take them or leave them in full freedom because the Lord stands as the true center of our being. This foundational experience of spiritual freedom transforms what has been understood as Christian detachment from a very miserly and negative notion into a wonderfully carefree detachment of mind and heart in all things because we find ourselves deeply attached to Christ the Lord as the source of life and fruitfulness. At this stage of our spiritual awakening, detachment seems not something we arduously struggle for but rather something we receive as gift and grace.

ALWAYS MORE OF GOD

At the beginning of this experience it seemed that we could not take any more pain, frustration, or disaster. Now our experience undergoes a radical shift. Though the difficulties and wounds remain, God begins to fill up our emptiness and helplessness with himself. The experience builds as the Dark Night transforms itself more and more into the overflowing fullness of God. Now it almost seems we cannot take any more of God. The surge of peace, joy, love, and simply God just keeps coming and coming. It is so unbelievable, so wonderful. God is Good.

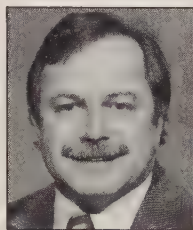
This sometimes quiet, sometimes exuberant surge of the Divine into all the parts of our being was the experience of Augustine and later of Ignatius of Loyola—*Deus semper major* (God is always greater). We never get all of God and God’s presence, hope, love, healing, and so forth all at once.

We simply cannot take it. Yet moment by moment, day by day, in season and out, there is always more and more of God.

In the fourth point of the Contemplation for Love, at the end of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius uses two other images to capture this same sense of the expansive outpouring of God we have experienced in the parable of the mustard seed. In the light of all that has happened during the retreat, especially reliving the paschal mystery in our own lives during the third and fourth weeks of the Exercises, Ignatius invites us to recall that all our human powers and gifts (e.g., our talents and energies; our longings for justice, goodness, mercy) are not simply ours but rather a sharing in God's own powers "as rays of light from the sun and as waters from their fountain." These images capture the sense of empowering energy that comes from sharing the fullness of God that just keeps coming and coming, as if from an inexhaustible source, in abundance—unending and without limit.

These reflections may sound unbelievable. At any particular moment our actual faith experience of God may seem very small—like a tiny mustard seed. But an excruciating event—or even one of great joy—can occasion our turning ourselves and

our lives over to the Lord as that vital Center of all that we are and hope to become. Thus our experience of God begins to grow. Sometimes it is like the seed, growing secretly (Mark 4:26–29). At other times it is like a tree or plant that bursts forth into the sunlight with robust vitality and color. And like the mustard seed, which eventually becomes the largest of shrubs, to which the birds of the air come to take shelter and build their nests, the Lord becomes the sustaining and empowering Source in abundance for ourselves and all we cherish and hope for. With the parable of the mustard seed, Jesus teaches us about his and our ever-greater experience of our loving, gracious God—*Deus semper major*.



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Warning Signals Should Alert Parents

The abuse of drugs by young people in this country is not a problem that's disappearing. Recent statistics show the opposite: it's getting worse. Parents and others who have children or adolescents in their care ought to watch for telltale signals. Partnerships for a Drug-Free America has been trying to familiarize adults with the following possible signs of drug abuse:

- Chronic eye redness, sore throat, or dry cough.
- Chronic lying, especially about whereabouts.
- Wholesale changes in friends.
- Stealing.
- Deteriorating relationships with family members.
- Wild mood swings, hostility, or abusive behavior.
- Chronic fatigue, withdrawal, carelessness about personal grooming.
- Major changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Loss of interest in favorite activities, hobbies, sports.
- School problems (slipping grades, absenteeism).

Most of these signs tend to develop gradually, not suddenly. Furthermore, they are clues rather than absolutely reliable evidence of drug use. Many of these

warning signals are the same as those for depression or for the ordinary ups and downs of being a teenager. They can also alert an observer to the possibility that a physical or emotional illness is present, calling for prompt diagnosis and treatment by a health professional.

Persons wanting information about drug programs in their area can call their family doctor, local hospital, county mental health society, or school counselor for a referral. They can also call the national Helpline (800-662-HELP) for advice and a referral.

To obtain a well-written booklet providing useful information on how to talk with young persons about drugs, phone 1-800-624-0100 and ask for a free copy of "A Parent's Guide to Prevention." Pastors and educators would do well to keep copies of this booklet on hand to share with parents who are starting to worry about their children's appearance or behavior. An example of the booklet's clear and direct language: "Wait for a calm moment and then explain that you're worried about certain behavior (be specific) and give your child every opportunity to explain. That means really listening, not doing all the talking."

Balancing Life in Community

Marie Elizabeth Siroky, M.S.C.

Living a healthy, fruitful life within a religious community entails a balance of many things: prayer, ministry, time for self-enrichment, and time with and for each other. Numerous books and seminars suggest ways for religious to maintain this balance, but there is no definitive schedule. As unique individuals, we each need to find the balance that works best for us and, in turn, nourishes our community. For religious who are recovering from alcoholism, there is yet another balance that needs to be maintained in community life: that of the recovery program. A recovery program affects more than the individual; it is an integral part of an alcoholic's life. Every religious brings his or her entire life into community. A recovering alcoholic brings a recovery program that affects community as much as his or her personal prayer, ministry, and personality.

Yet a program that helps a recovering alcoholic maintain sobriety is not always understood by other community members, nor is it always considered by them to be of the same importance as ministry or prayer. Recently, I was asked "Just what does a recovering religious need to stay sober? How many AA meetings a week are required?" I found my answer in the slogans of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): "One Day at a Time" and "Keep It Simple."

What keeps a religious in tune with his or her calling and his or her God? Prayer. What keeps an alcoholic leading a sober life? A program of recov-

ery. Both prayer and program are necessary components of a prosperous religious life. Our prayer and program nourish us, free us, and bring us closer to becoming the persons God created us to be. Not only do we personally feel the benefits of community life balanced with individual prayer and program; our religious community is also enriched.

While balance is attainable, it is not easily defined. Consider the diversity of answers to the following questions: How many hours are you going to need in prayer this week? Why do you spend three hours at prayer one week and none the next? Do you think that eventually you'll have spent enough hours in prayer that you won't need to go to chapel anymore? Just how important is your prayer to your vocation? Why do you pray with gestures—can't you recite the office?

NO SIMPLE ANSWERS

People's answers to these questions will vary. Prayer is very personal, and as individual as each one of us. What is effective for one may or may not be fruitful for another. Centering prayer, creative movement, and journaling are just a few of the many types of prayer religious use. Likewise, programs for recovery are equally personal; attendance at AA meetings might be combined with speaking commitments, sponsorship, committee work, or other activities. Thus, recovering alcohol-

ics will give varied responses to the following questions: How many meetings a week do you need to stay sober? Don't you feel that eventually you won't have to get your support from outside the community? How important is it for you to talk to other alcoholics? Do all alcoholics have to attend meetings?

Life, as unpredictable as it can be, requires us to be somewhat flexible. It is rare when we do not adjust our schedule—including our time for prayer or AA meetings—to accommodate unexpected situations. At times we may ask family and friends to support us with their prayers, or we may phone a few people from the program. The flexibility and support of our prayer life and program allow us to continue living fruitful lives within community.

EXTREMISM A TEMPTATION

Yet many of us go to extremes, spending either too much time or not enough time at prayer. What about religious who spend hours sitting in chapel at prayer and attend numerous daily masses, yet somehow cannot manage the social aspects of community life? They cannot maintain the balance in their lives and are incapable of integrating themselves into community. Many of us, for various reasons, neglect our prayer life. We become too busy in ministry, or too tired; days, weeks, and longer periods pass without fruitful prayer. The effects of too little or too much are obvious. We lose our emotional stability, and our anger, irritability, isolation, and depression affect not only ourselves but our whole community.

Similar effects are felt by recovering alcoholics who go to extremes with their program. Those who neglect their recovery program (e.g., by ignoring the twelve steps or allowing considerable time to pass without attending AA meetings or contacting other alcoholics) and those who become overly

immersed in a program (e.g., running from AA meeting to addiction workshop to seminar without integrating sobriety into community life) not only risk slipping back into emotional instability but also risk eventually slipping back into active alcoholism. Thus, an imbalance of program and community life can be as devastating for individual and community as an imbalance of prayer and community life.

BALANCE TAKES EFFORT

Maintaining a balance is a constant and lifelong struggle. We know the struggle is worthwhile, for all of us have felt the rewards of a healthy, balanced life: moments of serenity, the inner peace of retreat, the true joys of friendship and love within community. It is because we have personally experienced these rewards that we are willing to work at balancing program, prayer, and community life—and willingness is the key. As long as we are willing, we are closer to becoming the persons God created us to be, and the community to which God calls us is also reaching fulfillment. Religious today, recovering or not, need to be willing to balance prayer, program, and community if they and their communities are to be healthy and vital. The simplicity of balance is that it is attainable when acted on every day, one day at a time.



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The Family as Church in the Home

David M. Thomas, Ph.D.

Reading the documents of Vatican II is like dancing across a minefield: at any moment you might "explode" with a new insight or an expanded awareness. That is what happened when, in the midst of preparing a class on the contemporary church, I read in section 11 of *Lumen Gentium*, "The family is, so to speak, the domestic church."

At the time, to be honest, I had very little understanding of the full meaning of that phrase. But it was enough to set me on a theological quest that has now lasted for more than twenty-five years. Slowly yet steadfastly, I have been mining and refining the richness of this simple concept. I continue to stand in awe before the claim that ordinary family life embodies the presence and power of God. On rough days, remembering the ecclesial identity of my family life feels like walking with a stone in my shoe. On good days, however, I am lifted up upon the clouds.

I have also become aware that for all the blessings a family can receive, it can also be a source of great hurt. Our own family has been involved in the ministry of foster care for infants and children, many of whom are judged as having special needs. We witness firsthand the tragedy of abuse and neglect. Nevertheless, the importance of the family is not negated by occasional failure; in fact, it is all the more accentuated.

In the summer of 1992 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) Committee on Mar-

riage and Family Life sponsored a theological and pastoral colloquium on "The Christian Family as Domestic Church." The meeting took place in the shadow of the famous golden dome of the chapel at the University of Notre Dame. For me it was a very special honor to be invited to serve as the facilitator for the meeting. I anticipated a discussion that would be both challenging and confirming, and I was not disappointed.

Not only had I dedicated a great deal of professional effort to working on a theology of the Christian family, but I also held three degrees from Notre Dame, including a Ph.D. in theology. Our first two children were born in Notre Dame, Indiana, while I worked on my graduate degrees. In fact, the very first class I taught at the university was interrupted by the news that my wife had just begun labor in birthing our second-born (I let the class out early that day). So for me, a return to Notre Dame to discuss the Christian family was not just another intellectual exercise; it was very personal. And that is an important starting point for this reflection on the ecclesial identity of the family. On the one hand, there are some aspects of our faith life that tend to touch only individual parts of our personhood. But family is not like that at all. The family dimension of each of us, including religious and clergy, is pervasive and possibly profound.

For each of us, the foundational elements of

personhood are created in the family. Family impressions are usually deep and lifelong. Consider, for example, how many of the problems addressed in the field of mental health originate in family experiences. The discipline of psychology has known this for a long time. It now appears that the church is learning a similar lesson.

ANCIENT WORDS SAID ANEW

The church has been around for a long time. What that says for Christians is that our familial religious history can be traced back to a home in Nazareth, occupied by a small family with a son named Jesus. Sound theological reflection will use the wisdom of each historical period to provide approaches and sensitivities for creating Christian wisdom. Insights and methods of family studies can assist us toward a fuller and deeper understanding of the life of the Christian family and the communal life of the wider church.

Vatican II did not create new language when it called the family "the domestic church." Patristic scholars remind us that Saint Augustine—and even more, Saint John Chrysostom—wrote about the family as the domestic church. But then a hiatus of silence seemed to engulf the church until the term was restored by Vatican II. It should also be noted that Pope Paul VI, in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization*) and Pope John Paul II, in *Familiaris Consortio* (*On the Family*), used the term with frequency and ease.

Yet the simple use of a term does not capture its full significance. Words take on meaning when nested in meaningful contexts. Words have power when they can be connected with lived experience; they give that experience connection with what is most meaningful from a Christian perspective.

POWER OF THE AUTHENTIC WORD

In the NCCB colloquium, one of the discussant groups was named "the experience group." The NCCB wanted to include in the theological conversation people who came uncluttered with formal academic or theological baggage, because it was felt that too many of our theological conversations are abstract or disconnected from ordinary lived experience. The colloquium also included groups of pastoral ministers and theologians. It was a good mix for a discussion of the pressing issues of family life.

Participants expressed strong interest in the words of Pope John Paul II: "The family absolutely needs to hear ever anew and to understand ever more deeply the authentic words that reveal its identity, its inner resources, and the importance of its mission" (*Familiaris Consortio*).

How much we all need "authentic words" that breathe life, love, and hope into our daily doings.

As the conversation proceeded, all the groups testified to the meaningful connection between the life of the family and one's life with God. It was said over and over again that family events are experienced as events of sanctification and healing.

When asked whether the ecclesial identity of the family as "the domestic church" was a reality or simply a metaphor, the response was that it was indeed a reality. Awareness of the ecclesial dimension of the family allows one to "make sense" of the everyday and ordinary, which is the bedrock of Christian spirituality in the world.

Language can embody power. Language that is deeply authentic can orient consciousness to capture a fuller measure of all that is present in the existential event. In the context of discussion of the family as domestic church, it can awaken an awareness of the spiritual depth of family events, which connects them to the basic dynamics of the Christian life. That expanded awareness can deepen motivation, excite the imagination, and provide a meaning for family life that integrates faith with life *as it is being lived*.

CHURCH IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Well known is that principle of living which comes from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: The quest for finding God is in all things. Of course, this principle is not exclusive to Ignatian spirituality; it flows from the center of the gospel.

I will sketch some possible directions suggested by the basic truth that the life of the Christian family embodies ecclesial reality. In recent descriptive writings on the church, particularly those of Pope John Paul II, church life is described and analyzed from the perspective of the three messianic functions of Jesus—those of Priest, Prophet, and King. Not only do these titles for Jesus capture significant dimensions of his life; they also touch on major dimensions of all life that is fully human.

PRIESTLY DIMENSION OF FAMILY

The priestly aspect of the life of Jesus, and of the church that continues his presence and activity among us, focuses on the celebrational aspect of life. Founded on God's good creation and redeemed by Christ's death and resurrection, we find ourselves in a world, to use a phrase of Gerard Manley Hopkins, "charged with the grandeur of God." The priestly act of Christ, which is continued in the life of the church, is that of praise and thanksgiving.

This priestly dimension of church life acknowledges the essential goodness of the gift of life, along with those events that accompany it each day. Each event comes wrapped with grace and truth. Created events come into being from God, who is the source of all existence. God comes with the event and in it as the One who invites the best

possible outcome. In human freedom, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, we bring to the event our own presence and capacity for making decisions that will bring forth a full measure of God's will. Thus we participate in the development of creation and the fuller realization of God's Kingdom.

Accepting daily events in gratitude and praise becomes the continued offering of the church to God. Of course, religious language like this can be abstract and airy, so we are encouraged to express this more concretely and explicitly in terms of the life of the Christian family. A passage from Pope John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* aims to do exactly this by describing ordinary family events from a Christian perspective. In describing family prayer, he writes: "Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear—all of these make God's loving intervention in the family's history." These words summarize so well the variety of events that constitute family life. Note that they are listed as raw material for the priestly prayer of the family. All the major moments of family life are given by God so that we may return them to God as an offering of praise and gratitude.

The Catholic church celebrates seasons of the liturgical year with appropriate parish-based religious activities. Do we find a similar pattern in the activities of the family? According to recent research, one of the indicators of healthy family life is that the family creates, participates in, and passes on rituals and gestures that embody the family's values. Family rituals can be very simple or highly elaborate. They may be tied to explicitly religious feasts like Christmas and Easter, or they may be completely secular (e.g., that special way the family celebrates Super Bowl Sunday). The point to be taken is that celebrations are most meaningful when related to one's Christian faith. Through such celebrations the family, as the church of the home, expresses its participation in the priesthood of the Lord.

PROPHETIC ROLE OF FAMILY

Christ came to announce the Good News of salvation and to live a way of life commensurate with his salvific status. Central to the continuation of Christ's prophetic role are ecclesial events of proclamation and witness. The church has continued Christ's prophetic life in word and deed through the centuries.

In recent years significant attention has been focused on the role of the family in communicating the gospel to all its members. Pope John Paul II has repeatedly noted that the future of evangelization depends largely on the church of the home. In *Familiaris Consortio*, his words could hardly be

more forceful. "The ministry of evangelization carried out by Christian parents is original and irreplaceable. It assumes the characteristics typical of family life itself, which should be interwoven with love, simplicity, practicality and daily witness." How much this sounds like the advice of professionals in the field of mental health. What happens in family experience, particularly in one's early years, often creates a lasting impression. So important are the early gestures of simple and practical love.

Is not the prophetic word that which establishes and supports all human life? Is not the parental word of love, acceptance, and welcome not also the expression of God's love? The family is the first church setting in which the Good News is proclaimed in word and deed. Granted, we are describing an ideal, but enfleshment of that ideal is sorely needed in today's fast-paced, impersonal, and even destructive world. Furthermore, the loving word is crucial throughout life, not just for the beginning of life.

Prophetic words and deeds are interpersonal; they occur between people. The authentic prophetic word carries the message of God. For Christians this message contains in sacramental form God's faithful and forgiving love of the person. The family is admirably designed to express that word in good times and in not-so-good times.

The family is systemic in nature, an emotional affiliation of interconnected individuals. This perspective allows us to describe the family as possessing a unique Christian spirit, a distinctive *élan vital*. Thinking about how the family actualizes the church in its communal life helps us understand more vividly Paul's organic image of the church as the Body of Christ. The point is not to claim an exclusiveness of ecclesial identity for the Christian family, but simply to establish its claim of being a church, especially when genuine words and gestures of altruistic love are expressed.

FAMILY SERVING LIFE AND LOVE

Long ago, on a dark and stormy night, when our children were still small, I was awakened by the pleading call of one of our little ones. "Wawa, wawa" echoed through the house. I knew right away that this was the call of a thirsty child. I allowed wakeful consciousness to enter me slowly as I staggered to the bathroom for a cup of water. Suddenly, the Spirit of God addressed me with a reminder of Matthew's graphic account of the Last Judgment. There it was, as plain as could be: I was giving drink to the thirsty, and my act had eternal significance. I must add that the clarity of this insight has grown over the years; that night it was not much more than a blur. Nevertheless, it was real. Family ministry was happening in my own family.

When Christ's ministry as King is described in contemporary Christology, his service to others is highlighted. That ministry of service is continued by the church, especially through its ministry to the poor and needy. The ecclesial ministry of the Christian family encompasses all those countless acts of family service—everything from taking out the garbage to listening to a child's account of a slumber party.

It should also be noted that the family, both corporately and as individuals, is challenged to ministry outside the family. The New Testament often recommends the care of widows and orphans as an expression of authentic Christian love. Given the family practices of biblical times, scholars like to point out that widows and orphans were those without family connections. Thus, they were marginalized people. Through hospitality, households were encouraged to open their homes and their hearts to these outsiders. Karl Barth, the respected Swiss Protestant theologian, liked to say that a Christian home had doors and windows not only to let in the air but also to connect the family with the outside world. Ministry to other families and to individuals is an essential feature of the ministry of the Christian family.

RAMIFICATIONS OF FAMILY EMPHASIS

The acid test for Christian theological reflection is the articulation of some good answers to the question, "So what?" In answer to that question, one may cite several important ramifications of a deeper sense of the ecclesial nature of the Christian family.

The more one can include in the awareness of daily living specific connections with the life of faith, the more one will be moved to generosity and commitment. Since so many Christians live in a multitude of family settings, the more one's religious energy can be focused in one's home setting, the better—what's close to home is usually close to life.

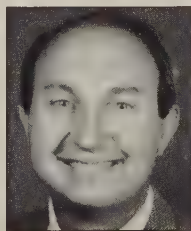
Awareness of the family setting on the part of church leadership will deepen their awareness and appreciation of the religious needs of the family. A pastoral directive of Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* has served as a foundation for the U.S.

bishops' document on *A Family Perspective in Church and Society*. The pope wrote, "No plan or organized pastoral work at any level must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral area of the family."

The relational dimension of Christianity receives more pointed emphasis when family life is included as part of the life of the church. As John Paul II notes in *Familiaris Consortio*, "Thanks to love within the family, the church can and ought to take on a more homelike or family dimension, developing a more human and fraternal style of relationships." As Christians we are all sisters and brothers in Christ. Has this traditional way of describing the relational life of the church really taken hold? Maybe we need a new starting point. Maybe by allowing our religious imaginations to be influenced by the love and concern of the Christian family, we might discover untapped resources for church renewal.

In many ways, the family dimension of church life is more like a land mine than a gold mine. "Family" is such a loaded concept. For some people, the mere mention of the word brings tears of joy, for others tears of sadness. Family is the most immediate community in personal life. Family can carry connotations of separateness, narcissism, escape, abuse, and a whole host of other negative or destructive images. A church proclaiming a family emphasis should be aware that it might unwittingly cause single people, whether young or old, to feel a sense of rejection. *Family* must be used as an inclusive term, inviting the full diversity we find in today's church membership.

A final thought. I recently heard family described as that place where stability and intimacy cross. Might this even be a way of describing God?



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Genesis of a Spirituality

Patrick J. McDonald, M.S.W.

Near my right shoulder, on the desk in my office where I practice psychotherapy every day, stands a framed black-and-white photograph of my father and myself, taken in 1941. I remember the experience captured in this small photo so vividly; I often sit and ponder its meaning when I'm anxious or disturbed about something, because it grounds me so.

The photo is really quite unimaginative. It portrays a man holding a child on his shoulder on a bright, sunny day. Expanses of pavement and an empty park bench are in the background, and immediately behind the man and child is a five-foot-high chain-link fence; hills can be seen in the distance. I, the blond-headed child, appear to be two or three years old. My father looks every bit the part of the 1940s man: closely cropped brown hair, parted near the middle; pleated trousers, lace-up shoes, and a starched, home-pressed white cotton shirt, open at the collar. His shirtsleeves are rolled up two turns, cuffs still neat, exposing muscular forearms; his shoulders look broad and strong. The harsh overhead sun intensely etches the high cheekbones on his sculptured 32-year-old face; time has washed out some of his other features in this image.

I remember looking directly toward the camera, which in those days was carefully set and operated with a protective hand held over the upper viewing port to play the sunlight. The magic boxlike ma-

chine, with a safety pin for a shutter spring, was held by my Uncle Cliff, who coaxed me to smile so he could capture the right moment. He almost caught that moment, but he didn't move quite fast enough. The photo shows me looking off across the broad expanse of pavement. The image does, however, reflect that it was a happy afternoon.

I easily recall, even after fifty years, what made that day so memorable: a field trip to the airport in Omaha, Nebraska. In the summer of 1941 you could stand outside the terminal building entrance, in front of a chain-link fence, and if your daddy lifted you high enough, you had an unobstructed view of a United Airlines Mainliner DC-3 as it taxied straight at you and stopped only about fifty feet away. From the viewpoint of a 2-year-old, the airplane looked as big as a house or a whale. Its big, round, oily engines made a deafening roar, causing two chrome propellers to glint at you as the plane turned toward the bright sun. Those angry power plants would then stop dead, and passengers would cautiously exit the belly of the whale, holding a free hand over their eyes like a visor to shield them from the bright sun as they searched for familiar faces in the waiting crowd. My dad and Uncle Cliff always coaxed me to wave at the pilots. The magical, mysterious pilots always waved back with equal enthusiasm, leaving deep impressions on a 2-year-old mind.

That was the foundational experience for me. It

was as simple as that. Why does it still mean so much to me after fifty years? Because a seed planted that day has gradually grown into fullness. In psychological terms, the experience was the beginning of a self-structure.

A SENSE OF SELF

In *The Search for the Real Self*, James F. Masterson defines *self* as a core experience, a composite of feelings and perceptions whereby a person knows who he or she is. With that awareness an individual can function and operate comfortably in the social environment. A genuine sense of self allows one to experience life as a special someone who moves through time and space; the experience of specialness remains, even with the inevitable changes in one's personal history.

Defining the self unambiguously is about as difficult as taking a photo with a 1941 box camera. If you move too close, the image is lost in the viewfinder. If you step back too far, the image disappears into the background. If your subject doesn't hold still, your print will be blurred and fuzzy. If you don't play the sunlight properly (that is, locate it behind your back and use it to highlight the face and body of your subject), all unique characteristics of the person are lost in darkness or in a complete washout of the negative.

The self is a fluid and changing reality. Any attempt to capture it in a clear description is doomed to failure. It comes down to a self now, trying to define a self as remembered—a highly selective and complicated process. Masterson compares self-definition to looking through a kaleidoscope, seeing pieces of colored glass forming and reforming shapes, patterns, and designs that are always changing, even though the pieces stay the same. "There is also another self," Masterson writes, "the self who holds the tube up to the light and turns the end, allowing the pieces to fall and reassemble and form new patterns. This is the functional aspect of the real self that expresses, organizes, and observes the patterns of our lives."

The photograph on my desk not only expresses an early self-construct; it also expresses, through my father's image, a personal archetype. According to Jungian psychologists, an archetype is a primary imprint, an experience embedded deep within the repositories of a person's mind, that continues to influence all behavior and development from there on. This archetype offers a person the groundwork for constructing images of the self as developmental processes continue throughout his or her life history. Archetypes are looked on as models around which new experiences are shaped. As Polly Young-Eisendrath and James A. Hall note in *Jung's Self-Psychology*, Jungians believe that archetypes are the primary organizers of the human psyche. They are universally shared images found in all cultures.

There is little doubt about the marvelous kind of grounding that early field trip gave me. In my 2-year-old mind, the archetypal image of my father offered security, protection, warmth, and nurturance. He provided me a lofty perch from which to explore the world as he clarified awesome facts and lasting impressions. He consolidated the all-powerful father image with that of the father-guru. The development of my young self was solidly anchored in that moment and in other moments like it. In later developmental experiences, the archetype of the all-loving father gave me a solid backdrop against which it was suitable to push back, test my own reality, react, rebel, and then return to a safe haven when defeated. None of these dynamic processes came easily, but I can see more clearly now at midlife what I understood so little about during earlier years.

The recent writings of Robert Bly shed light on the specific phenomenon of a male consciousness. Bly now travels the country quoting German psychoanalyst Alexander Mitscherlich to gatherings of men. Mitscherlich speaks of the necessity of an "organic connection," a deep bonding between father and son, if healthy male developmental processes are to evolve. As Bly elucidates, the organic connection becomes firmly established as fathers and sons spend time together, entering into each others' lives by learning to be close in culturally defined ritual space. If the organic connection is missed for whatever reason, a "hole" will develop in the young child's psyche, and that hole will fill up with demons. No Disney characters, no successes, no relationships can fill up this hole. The demons remain until they are exorcised in later life.

In light of these reflections on the development of the male psyche, I now want to focus on three themes and explore them at some depth: exorcising the demons, a view of spirituality, and playing the sunlight. Although the explorations will be made from a male developmental perspective, they should be useful to anyone interested in examining human spirituality. At the center of these reflections is the notion of the self and how it influences developmental processes and serves as the foundation for any healthy and genuine relationship with God.

EXORCISING THE DEMONS

The photograph in my office expresses for me the kind of organic bonding Robert Bly talks about. The field-trip day was a day numbered among other days, most of which were quickly forgotten. The bonding process had been well under way by the time that single event burned its way into the depths of my soul. I remember experiencing, even that far back in my history, a beautiful, intuitive sense of the presence of God. There was an as-yet-undefined but clearly real sense that a loving

I learned to know a God who embraces but never holds on so tightly that one's personal strengths are not allowed to develop

Father-God was communicating with me through holding, nurturing, and caring, mediated by my own father's steady, loving presence. Any subsequent spiritual quest was always referenced, weighed, and judged with this nurturing experience at its center. The awareness of the nature of God slowly emerged out of this event as I sifted through and integrated what I was later taught by "official" sources of wisdom. Bly might call this wrestling with one's own demons. In many cases, wrestling is what it felt like. There are so many memorable events that I can only offer a few of them, but they are benchmark experiences.

I recall an experience in an early grade of Catholic school, where one of the now nameless and faceless teachers did her best to instill in us an appreciation of the presence of God in all things. I had no problem at all in seeing that God was present in flowers, mountains, plants, and animals. When God was presented, however, as the unbending master of all reality, I began to grow uneasy. The face of God began to change even more dramatically in the context of moral order; he was presented as harsh, judgmental, unbending, and ready to assign eternal punishment to anyone who so much as tampered with the established order of the universe. My young friends and I definitely had some problems with this approach, especially when we risked being sent to hell for all eternity for an act as simple as eating meat on Friday. At our age, in the early 1950s, these ideas were just too big to mess around with, so we reluctantly conceded. I found myself facing, in fear and trembling, an early gut-wrenching dilemma: if God is truly a father in heaven, why is he so harsh, unbending, and unbelievably quick to hand out penalties? If we are

supposed to love him as a father, where is his tenderness and warmth in return? The concept of God didn't match my experience of what a father should be. I remember going home one evening feeling very discouraged and fearful, but I managed to find the courage to raise this extremely sensitive subject with my father. Much to my relief, I discovered that he found it equally difficult to agree with the conventional wisdom of the day. He assured me that he believed the school painted too harsh a picture. God was first and foremost a God of love who cares about each of us and watches out for our concerns. This early experience of dissonance between what I knew intuitively and what I was taught by official sources set me on a restless thirty-five-year course of wrestling with the idea of a loving God. The exorcism of fear and doubt that began at my father's knee that night was finally brought to completion in the mid-1980s with an appreciation of the refreshing theology that came with Vatican II.

ADOLESCENCE ALLOWS TESTING

Then there were the stormy days of adolescence. For me they represented a push back from welcoming arms and a mad dash toward independence. The interaction between my father and me was often intense and conflicted. His strong arms allowed him to defend himself quite well, and we both managed somehow to survive the topsy-turvy process of my growing from childhood to adult life. He never held on too tightly during those intense years; he gave me enough room to work out the terms of my life as I saw fit. His strong shoulders gave me a backdrop for testing out my emerging adolescent self—clumsy, outrageous, overstated, obnoxious—in unique ways. There aren't enough adjectives to describe this disconnected period of life. But I was also learning a great deal about God during this time, as the Father expressed his openness toward me through these same experiences. I learned to know a God who embraces but never holds on so tightly that one's personal strengths are not allowed to develop. It became clearer that this God allows you to fail, then embraces you when you are ready to take a second look at yourself. The demons I wrestled with during those years were easily exorcised in later life, after I left home and tried life on my own. There was always the security of coming back to my home base to be embraced and affirmed again as the knowledge of God and my awareness of my emerging self developed in hidden ways.

EXPERIENCE OF MORTALITY

In the long stretches of my adult life, the journey was undisturbed for the most part. That brought isolation, however, as I plunged myself into a

career, busily working out a relationship with life and success. The acquired and deeply embedded demons of arrogance, detachment, and smug self-containment were exorcised by my tears during a long night of vigil in a hospital coronary care unit in 1976, as my father wavered between life and death. He survived that first heart attack, and for the first time in my life I saw him in a weak and pained position. My mortality closed in on me as it never had before. I was severely shaken by the entire experience and came out of it with my priorities rearranged again.

God allowed my father to spend eleven more years with our family, and those years became for him a time of a rich savoring of life. There was a visible opening up of communication, a deep sharing of himself. He and my mother became more expressive of their affection and tenderness for one another, and this spontaneity pleasantly affected the interaction of our entire family. "I love you" became a common part of our family vocabulary.

In the eleven years after my father's first heart attack, many more of my demons were exorcised, and their demise signaled my emergence into the fullness of midlife. My midlife self, now softened, more open, and surer of its own competence and boundaries, resonated to a more clearly defined experience of God in all reality. God became more tender, even emotional, and I became experientially aware of his unswerving loyalty, which had been with me through all the previous developmental phases of my life. My spirituality became less cerebral and more affective. It was a welcome coming of age. There was the unmistakable experience of having come full circle to reclaim a warm place in the sun and to allow myself to be loved and nurtured without reservation.

I began to find echoes of this coming home in the works of some of the classical spiritual writers. Thomas Merton, throughout his writings, refers to the experience as the development of the true self. As he writes in *New Seeds of Contemplation*, "The seeds that are planted in my liberty at every moment, by God's will, are the seeds of my own identity, my own reality, my own happiness, my own sanctity. To refuse them is to refuse everything; it is the refusal of my own existence and being: of my identity, my very self."

The last of my stubborn demons of accumulated alienation and indifference were finally dealt with by doing a lot of walking and talking with my father as he recovered from a subsequent heart attack in 1983. He was now moving gracefully into his later years. Our walks were occasions for many pleasant conversations about life. We shared what we had each learned as we had journeyed, on separate tracks, through our respective experiences, and we talked about what might lie ahead for us in the next life. By this time we could support and nurture one another. He knew that he was not going to live

forever, and he shared his thoughts about his mortality. I gave him the book *Eternal Life?* by Hans Kung. That book stimulated deep conversations between us. My father disclosed that he had already had a near-death experience, during his first heart attack in 1976, but hesitated to talk about it in detail because it was such a private experience.

At another time the child became mirror to the father when he registered concern that he had not been present enough to his family because he had spent so much time and energy making a living, paying bills, and trying to do what a father was expected to do. I described to him the photograph of the two of us, which I had already placed in my office, and let him know that I kept it there to remind me of the grounding I had received from him. I reassured him that if there was one thing I remembered from childhood, it was the fact that he was always present to us, consistently and visibly. That conversation exorcised some of his demons of doubt and uncertainty and helped him die in peace. His death came not long after that conversation.

He was practicing his violin solo for the local parish Christmas liturgy when he and my mother took a break and began their daily walk. It was about 11:00 in the morning. He suffered his last heart attack and died in my mother's arms. He died in the way he had lived: quietly, without bothering anyone. A violin solo, stopped in midmeasure.

A VIEW OF SPIRITUALITY

Is it possible to develop a spirituality out of an experience of being held by your father on a sunny afternoon? For me, the answer is yes.

There are many forms of spirituality, each with its own merits. I define spirituality as the experience of discovering the true self. In the dynamics of discovering the true self, we discover God. To find support for this view of spirituality, I want to look briefly at the experiences of Jesus and his Father.

The scriptural account of the life of Jesus offers a view that his life and ministry were grounded in his relationship with his Father. Saint John's gospel describes this Father-Son relationship compellingly. The healing stories often begin with a public prayer by Jesus for the Father to empower him. Before raising Lazarus to life, Jesus prayed that he be given the power to perform the work at hand, in order that others might believe (John 11:44). Jesus believed that he and the Father were so united that he could do nothing on his own. He stated that "The Father and I are one" (John 14:9). The relationship between Father and Son was a personal one, expressed openly and eloquently in the word Jesus prayed often: *Abba*. A simple translation is "Daddy," and it expresses the tender relationship the two enjoyed. Because Jesus was grounded in his Father, he did wonderful works on the Father's behalf, and promises that we who are grounded in

For any spirituality to be genuine, it must leave room for God to do his wonderful works

similar ways will do similar works: "I assure you that the person who believes in me will do the same things I have done, yes, and he will do even greater things than these, for I am going away to the Father" (John 14:14).

The paradigm of Jesus's life offers a basis for understanding our own experience of relating to God, because the life of Jesus is the source, explanation, and promise of what our own journey to the Father is to be. In his book *Entering into the Heart of Jesus*, Father George A. Maloney expresses the reality this way: "As Jesus grew in wisdom and knowledge and grace before God and men (Luke 2:52), He entered into a fuller human awareness of the Father's love and self-giving. For us, contemplation is a growth through the infusion of faith, hope, love, and self-giving. We grow in awareness that God is always present, whom we contemplate by listening to and receiving God's communicating love for us, always constant, never changing, yet always freshly being revealed to us in the circumstances of our human situation. This is how Jesus also experienced the triune God within Him and His daily life."

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES INTERFERE

Few take issue with this notion of a Father-Son spirituality as recounted in the life of Jesus. Nor does there seem to be a problem in acceptance of this paradigm among those whose early childhood experiences were secure and peaceful. Their spirituality often develops in a rather predictable way through the various life stages. Those who grew up in dysfunctional families, however, find the paradigm less credible. Their early developmental experiences were often so distasteful that it is

repulsive to image God as a loving Father. My clients sometimes ask if they are to be excluded from a relationship with God because they were not fortunate enough to be born into a healthy family system. Most of my work as a psychotherapist relates to clients with a background of dysfunctional family experiences, and I have learned to appreciate the pain and anguish that lingers with some people for a lifetime. In working with male clients, two approaches to this pain are noteworthy.

One approach is to initiate a search for a more supportive early relationship experience. In most personal histories there is an uncle or grandfather or friend who served the functions of father in some way. This significant person offered a father substitute when one was needed and engendered grounding experiences essential to the development of the self. Perhaps there was a companion who walked through a segment of one's life and provided support and reassurance when no family member was available. Perhaps there was a hero archetype who was present at a developmental crossroads. For many clients, somewhere in the educational experience there was a sage who offered wisdom. For some, a visionary brought an exciting and stimulating view of what might be for the world. These archetypelike persons can be recalled to memory and their contributions explored, affirmed, and embraced. A revitalized sense of the self is often constructed upon their legacy.

The second approach is to let God heal the alienation between father and son. An illustration will help. I worked for a period of months with a client who was haunted relentlessly by severe anxiety. The sources of the anxiety were unusually vague, and talking through his conflicts left him with little relief. The anxiety was especially punishing during this professional man's working hours. His desire for relief eventually carried him through a one-year regimen of antianxiety medications and a brief series of electroshock treatments. The electroshock treatments were more disturbing than his anxiety, so he decided to discontinue them. His anguish persisted for several more months, and he decided to return to my office for a serious exploration of his family background. An examination of his family history revealed that he had bonded with his father at an early age. However, severe conflict and alienation developed between the two of them and lasted for many years. Much of his pain and anxiety came from a deep and unfulfilled desire to heal the conflict and forgive his father. Doing so was impossible, however, because his father had been deceased since 1967. My client related that his father had once told him, "Unless you change your ways, you're going to kill me." Two weeks later his father had died.

I suggested to my client that healing prayer might be an option for dealing with his anxiety,

and he expressed willingness to explore that in a future meeting.

He called unexpectedly one day, saying he needed an emergency meeting. I feared the worst. When we met he told me he had experienced a profound vision of the infinite love of God the Father for him. It had been such a touching and gentle experience that he wept for several hours afterward. God had embraced him and whispered to him not to fear, that all the wounds of alienation and emptiness would be healed. He was flooded with peace, and in the peace was able to forgive his father for all the misunderstanding and hostility they had traded over the years. The hostility melted away in tears.

For any spirituality to be genuine, it must leave room for God to do his wonderful works. The lesson in this illustration is obvious: God's healing love is not limited by a dysfunctional family background.

PLAYING THE SUNLIGHT

I would like to share a simple method of prayer that I use, which is helpful in my efforts to deepen my own relationship with the Father. I call this kind of prayer "playing the sunlight," since it mimics the moves needed to take a snapshot with a 1941 box camera. I have digested the process into four steps:

1. Locate Some Quiet Space. I find quiet space and begin orienting myself to the warm sunshine. I let it begin to soothe and relax me. During the warmer months I use a deck that opens onto a green belt park at the rear of my home. I stretch out on a comfortable lounge chair and drink in the lush surroundings. There are visitors who don't seem to mind my presence, so I watch them for a time: squirrels, chipmunks, and birds going about their business as I go about mine.

In the winter I sit in a recliner located in a corner of the family room. The sunshine comes through a glass patio door and warms me as I observe a winter landscape. Sometimes I just sit in my office and play the sunlight in my imagination by looking at the photo of my father and myself.

2. Begin to Breathe Deeply. Once I am in my personal space and have let the sun begin to do its soothing work, I start to breathe deeply and move into a kind of inner solitude. Stresses are breathed out and inner peace is breathed in. I might do this for ten or fifteen minutes until my body, mind, and emotions quiet down. This is preparation for the prayer time that follows.

3. Develop an Image. I picture the scene with my father and myself at the airport in Omaha and let

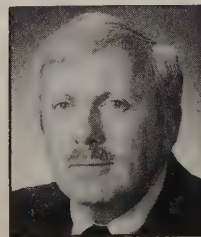
my imagination carry me back to that placid moment. I repeat the same word Jesus used, *Abba*, like a mantra, slowly, meaningfully, as I get in touch with my depths. The word *Abba* is easily and randomly alternated with *daddy* or *father*. Each time I repeat it, I relax more.

4. Be Open to the Experience. From here on, God plays the sunlight and brings experiences in and out of focus. I really don't worry about anything happening; I let God do the work. Whatever demons are left to be exorcised from my psyche are not a matter of consuming passion. The child within me comes to life and enjoys playing in the sunlight before the camera. God the Father at the same time nurtures me and renews a promise never to leave me an orphan. He asks for nothing in return except a response of love from the heart. At times there is a quiet, peaceful embrace. At other times there is nothing except quiet and warm sunlight. I never leave the experience without being refreshed from visiting a broad and open interior landscape. During one of these quiet moments I wrote the following piece:

Ground me
Abba, Daddy.
Ground me.
Smells of strong wide shoulders and starched cotton,
white in the summer sun.
Blissful, captive moment, a stirring in his young
arms.
Lofty classroom for the world; welcome knowledge,
gentle teacher.
Imprinted in my depths, forever, this view:
life as sunlit space to be opened.
With wisdom and age, a simple going back
to that still, silent grounding,
and enter its depths. Abba.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Bly, R. *Iron John: A Book about Men*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1990.
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Masterson, J. *The Search for the Real Self*. New York, New York: Macmillan, 1988.
Young-Eisendrath, P., and J. Hall. *Jung's Self-Psychology: A Constructivist Approach*. New York, New York: Guilford, 1990.



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The Artist and the Believer

James Torrens, S.J.

The Elect Are Called to Heaven

I.

as if fresh from volleyball
both sexes
sandy-haired
of a height, an age
(family resemblance
notable)
nude because it's June
and the Renaissance
mole, cicatrix, or tatoo
none
their pectorals
pronounced
pick of the species
Luca Signorelli pinxit

II.

in a Manhattan headwind
the year-end composer
(how short of an ideal!)
assembles
the wigged lady
(tennies but no socks)
the Rolex merchants
stern, with attaché
case

youth in a Yankee cap
backwards
heads of Medusa hair
heads expertly coiffed
a pitchman from India
"good price! good
price!"
baby in stroller behind
clear plastic
a good-natured looney
(we're on his steps)
arm-in-arm Asians
puzzled
some health-club
specimens
(sneaking a smoke)
runts, feed-sack bodies
and two that lean on
crutches

hold still, everyone
think paradise
yes, that's it (flash)
perfect

Art and religious faith are two passions, and passions make rigorous demands. Is there room enough for them both in one life? That depends on how much energy you have. After all, life has always to contain competing demands—business and home, friendship and romance, sports and relatives. Maturity means getting our priorities straight.

God and creativity seem like an easy match, a natural. In actuality, it isn't at all simple. God is a consuming fire. "My son, give me your heart" ("My daughter, give me all your attention"), God asks the divinity student (Prov. 23, 26). Does this mean don't give it to the stage, don't give it to jazz, don't give it to storytelling?

The call to discipleship is radical. "Sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow me," Jesus insists. "Unless you deny yourself and take up your cross, you cannot be my disciple." This does not seem to leave room for the daydreaming ("sleep of the soul" Maritain calls it), the self-awareness, the expenditure of time and precious materials—the necessary wastage, in other words—of art. Of course, neither does it seem to allow for romance, with so many larks and dead ends, or for bank accounts or financial planning, or for a regime of athletics. But let's concentrate on art.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, as a young Jesuit in Victorian England, thought that following a religious vocation meant the necessary sacrifice of his

art, his precious poetry. For another whole century, after all, seminary and convent life would convey precisely that expectation. Concert pianists, budding sculptors, to say nothing of aspiring writers, would find, upon entering religion, that they had to put their art on the back burner, giving it sporadic attention but never the absorbing interest and fierce dedication requisite for art.

Hopkins, entering religion, thought of his poetry as an indulgence of the ego incompatible with a humble life, a life centered on God. It took a religious superior, eventually—his seminary rector—to step in when Hopkins was marveling at a newspaper report of Christian heroism and to tell him directly, “God wants you to write about it.” Then the dam burst. All the imagery and insight and intense feeling that he had been storing up for years broke into one tremendous artistic expression of faith, “The Wreck of the Deutschland.”

SACRIFICE VS. DESTROY

It would be wrong to dismiss the early feelings of Hopkins as rigoristic and neurotic—“pre-Vatican II.” Hopkins had also sensed something quite true: that the priorities have to be declared and assured, sometimes at a high cost. One thinks of Mary Lou Williams, who abandoned jazz piano and composition after her Catholic conversion, only to go back and compose her powerful *Mass* years later. Hopkins, at the start, staked out his total offering. But then, like Abraham, he was ready for a theological lesson not in his textbooks: that the verb *to sacrifice* does not mean primarily “to destroy” but “to make holy,” to offer God something dear to us.

That incredible gift for vivid, musical language, for a punchy kind of rhythm and a syntax all his own, was *the* offering for which we now revere Gerard Manley Hopkins. His poetry was a unique outlet for his genuine devotion, for his neurotic but very pure spirit and intense affection. Talents and gifts have that purpose, to flower for God. It is what we owe ourselves and God. “Something beautiful for God” is not just about the life of Mother Teresa and about ministering to the homeless.

The illustrator and engraver Fritz Eichenberg, a Quaker, was drawn magnetically to Dorothy Day. His block engravings of Christ among the poor, and his cartoons about injustice, were inspired by what he learned from her and saw at the Catholic Worker house. In the introduction to a book of his drawings, *Works of Mercy*, Jim Forest, an ex-volunteer, says: “Fritz, in his modesty, considered his own contributions to be relatively minor compared to the heroic feats of those who lived among the destitute or went to prison in pursuit of peace.” Yet the Eichenberg engravings, especially “Christ of the Breadlines” and “Black Crucifixion,” are what people remember best—indelibly, we might say—about *The Catholic Worker*.

How about the conflicts, the facets of art and faith that seem averse to one another, contradictory? Sensuous receptivity and ascetic Christianity do not make easy roommates. Take the case of Manuel de Falla, perhaps Spain’s greatest composer of this century, a bachelor and an intensely religious man. De Falla, oddly, wrote nothing in the genre of sacred music. His most famous composition is *El Amor Brujo* (*That Witching Love*), a dramatization, or orchestration, of Eros. Later he repudiated that work, felt guilty for having composed it, probably confessed it, and stipulated in his will (too late, fortunately) that it be performed no more.

We can admire such strength of will, such resolute character. De Falla was not just being silly, “impossibly Spanish.” *El Amor Brujo*, after all, is a force, a passion among the strongest, that absorbs and overwhelms and makes a plaything of conscience and reason. Yet we can also admire the music, which has nothing at all pandering or seductive about it; it catches an elemental truth.

Friedrich von Schiller, the great German Romantic, was perhaps not wrong to say, “Excruciating honesty and total freedom from restraint is what we find nowhere else but in authentic works of art.” The restraint, or constraint, I think, has to come from within, from our way of seeing things. Does what you write or depict or sculpt have the mark of a believer? That is by no means a simple question. Ask Cézanne. The mere subject matter does not supply an answer. Some people handle religious subjects, even for a lifetime, without much depth; others treat the creaturely world, the so-called secular, with great reverence. Is it art or faith that is lacking in the first case and that triumphs in the second?

IGNATIUS RECOGNITION OF LOVE

It is our faith, is it not, that will determine how we register things, that will give us a certain way of feeling and seeing. Saint Ignatius of Loyola, at the culmination of his Spiritual Exercises, urges us to look at everything surrounding us and precious to us as streaming down from the love of God to each one personally. He entitles this exercise “Contemplation for Obtaining Love” and intends that it permeate our daily life.

Our experience, on the other hand, the skein of our lives, will serve up the subject matter, the unformed substance of our art. Experience can be cruel and painful, as well as happy. Roberta Nobleman, an English-born actor and teacher, developed a series of one-woman shows focused on women of faith—Julian of Norwich, Mary of Nazareth, Jeanette Piccard. Eventually this woman of faith and of the theater had to face, to assume as subject matter, the trauma of her own early life: the childhood experience of incest by her father.

Thanks to confrontation, continual prayer (she is an active Episcopalian), and years of therapy, she had passed from victim to survivor, to a more peaceful condition. But her hurt and healing were still in need of a "celebrant," as she put it.

Roberta Nobleman achieved this in *Masks and Mirrors*, a dramatic collage meant for inclusion within a workshop or discussion setting. Nobleman intertwines her own story (five years of abuse relieved by exciting visits to the theater) with that of Virginia Woolf, who was abused by her two half-brothers and who took refuge in story writing, and with that of Gustav Mahler, whose painful but serene *Resurrection Symphony* plays during a difficult sequence. *Masks and Mirrors*, as the title promises, is profuse in the symbolic. Most touching are the child masks, which are worn for mimed episodes; most haunting is the male mask of the sad-sack abuser, a scarred man, who is mimed as wielding his power. At one point the actress brings out a barrel of avoidance objects, a humorous litter; at another she performs the Scottish ballad "Tam Lin," an allegorical romance about the phases of hurt and healing. Plays by women on the subject of violation have commanded most of the attention this year at the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Louisville, Kentucky. Nobleman has made her strong and positive contribution to this current concern.

ART DEMANDS INVESTMENT

An art is a passion in that it makes one ferociously exact about detail, it allows a wide range of freedom ("Here are the materials; go to it"), and it brings the artisan, the craftsman, great satisfaction and joy. Dabbling is fine—occasional gardening, decorating, sketching, or sitting down at the piano. But a hobby or craft becomes an art and a passion

(imperceptibly, no doubt) when you think about it a lot, when you study how others have done it, when you try out many styles and forms, with the inevitable dead ends, on the way to developing your own voice, your own signature.

I have been serious about poetry since writing Christmas verse as a child. At school and in the seminary I was given many opportunities to study it, though not so many to write it. In graduate school and as a college English teacher I got more latitude, more encouragement—not much more time, but I became more resolute in stealing it. Poetry Writing was the most successful of my courses because it tapped the creativity and the sensitivity of students in an unusual way. And it kept my own juices flowing.

Living now in New York, I find myself gaping continually at the profusion of life about me on the streets, not much of it conforming to any standard. Recently, looking through art books for depictions of heaven or paradise, I was struck by a Renaissance vision of that happy place, *Gli Eletti Sono Vocati al Cielo* (*The Elect Are Called to Heaven*). The Renaissance had a definite bodily ideal, which the streets of New York contradict at every turn. Whether or to whatever extent New York is a heaven, diversity is a fact of life here; it is long past the stage of slogan. Hence the poem I include with these ponderings.



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The Value of an Avocation

Philip D. Cristantiello, Ph.D.

A hobby is a defiance of the contemporary. It is an assertion of those permanent values which the momentary eddies of social evolution have contravened or overlooked . . . every hobbyist is inherently a radical, and . . . his tribe is inherently a minority.

—Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

What good are hobbies, anyway? Educators seem to have given scant attention to assessing the role that avocational interests play in human development.

Consider these differences: Academic and competitive athletic achievements bring tuition grants and scholarships; hobbies rate but a nod. Curriculum committees define the content of students' academic time; peer pressure shapes the use of free time. Vocational choices fall under the purview of a career development office; avocational choices fall by the wayside. Vocational fitness is assessed by aptitude-test batteries; avocational fitness is discovered by chance. Occupational counseling begins in the prime of life; leisure counseling commences at retirement.

Although the terms *avocation* and *hobby* will be used interchangeably in this article, they are not strictly synonymous. While both refer to voluntary activities and involve a certain degree of expertise, an avocation is more formal than a hobby in that it

often involves the pursuit of some societal value. Evidently, avocational interests and hobbies are accorded secondary status. They are regarded as idle pursuits that lack the importance of academic studies and athletic activities. This reflects a grievously narrow perspective of human development.

The low priority given to leisure activities is especially evident in educational programs designed for specific professions (e.g., nursing) or special vocations (e.g., religious and clerical commitments). Typically, avocations or hobbies are seen as superficial diversions that call one away from more serious, full-time objectives. Indeed, such pursuits are often viewed as seductive, diverting the individual from the call of a higher order. Not even the credit that hobbies receive as stress reducers keeps them from being regarded as frivolous amusements.

Hobbies, however, are not pursuits to be feared or minimized; they are worthwhile. By actively encouraging students to develop hobbies, educators foster personal and professional growth. This article shows the positive impact of avocational interests on human development.

ANATOMY OF AN INTEREST

What awakens one person's attention puts another's to sleep. It is thus easy to misjudge another person's investment in a hobby. The nonpartici-

pant may mistakenly conclude that the participant's involvement is the result of an artificial embellishment of the activity (e.g., "Antique collectors exaggerate the value of old furniture") or a personal quirk or idiosyncrasy (e.g., "Jane always had a weird interest in things like butterflies")—or may make an arbitrary value judgment (e.g., "Henry's great investment of time with a ham radio is beyond anyone's comprehension"). Such conclusions reflect a lack of understanding about the magnetic power of interests.

You don't grab hold of an interest; it grabs hold of you. The attraction lies in the activity. It is not the result of artifice, neuroticism, or arbitrariness. The attraction is a response to an artifact or activity that possesses characteristics of sufficient novelty, complexity, beauty, or usefulness to draw attention in a sustained way. This is the heart of an interest.

Interest is sustained because a particular artifact (e.g., a flint arrowhead) or activity (e.g., playing a fiddle) absorbs the individual's capacities in a genuine and abiding way. The resulting involvement shows up in the individual's willing commitment to the nature of the artifact (e.g., hours of research at a museum may be necessary to identify the arrowhead) or the activity (e.g., a part-time fiddler spends as much free time as it takes to perfect his or her technique). The draw arises from the fact that one is captivated by the very process of understanding the origin of the arrowhead or the prospect of playing a musical instrument flawlessly. The stimulus stems from the subject matter. The draw is there in the object or activity. Wholehearted involvement is the result.

BENEFITS ARE MULTIPLE

Of course, a person's response to the needs of his or her interest does not occur in a vacuum. It requires conditions under which it can operate, such as intelligence and opportunity. Each person brings a repertoire of abilities and habits to bear in the pursuit of an interest. Indeed, involvement inevitably places demands on the person's abilities and habits. These demands sharpen, enrich, and extend the development of a person's talents. Challenge is a crucial factor that attaches the person to the interest, stimulating the individual's development.

Discovery is another engaging aspect of a personal interest. It leads to understanding and appreciation, which enable the hobbyist to function in a gratifying way. The hobbyist's state of well-being gets tied up with each developing stage of discovery. Each successive degree of challenge by, and mastery of, the subject matter solidifies the attachment. Consequently, personal commitment does not yield at the first sign of difficulty or fatigue. Nor does it depend on a pleasurable reward at every moment of involvement. Commitment continues

because involvement is as engaging as outcome. What one witnesses is genuine wholeheartedness. In contrast, we have seen (and perhaps experienced) feigned commitments to shallow academic or vocational interests. In such instances the derived satisfactions are fleeting and ephemeral. There is little or no development of the individual's capacities or enhancement of self-esteem.

Given the assessment described, hobbies and avocational interests take on a new complexion. They are not activities to be pursued just for relaxation or to provide filler for free time or to avoid idleness. They are activities that bring to fruition latent abilities, further those already in use, and stimulate the formation of disciplined habits of mind.

SHALLOW VS. GENUINE INTERESTS

Many people study subjects in educational programs as a duty or for the sake of acquiring academic credit. These subjects evoke little more than an obligatory commitment. Motivation is shaky—and it is particularly vulnerable when the demands of the subject are intense. If a student works at a subject just to get credit, he or she drops out mentally from any involvement with the subject once the course is over. Superficial commitment brings negative consequences. Students don't develop their powers, and shoddy habits of mind reflect the feigned involvement.

On the other hand, when a student becomes engaged in terms of an interest's own needs, motivation is genuine.

Indeed, neither an inept teacher nor a poor library stands in the way of the student's pursuit of the interest. Isn't this the kind of commitment that every profession and vocation should foster in its candidates? Often, it is in a hobby that a person first discovers that knowing a subject is its own reward.

INTERESTS DEVELOP PERSONS

Involvement in a hobby is shaped by standards of craftsmanship and a work ethic, as well as by the individual's preferences. Furthermore, such self-assertive acts as imitation, rivalry, acquisitiveness, exploration, and creativity are channeled by the hobby toward constructive objectives. Therefore, the pursuit of such interests contributes to a sense of worth as much as it does to a sense of personal expression. Such outcomes aid psychological development.

In addition, as an individual's interest continues, it serves as a selective agent that initiates and directs behavior appropriate to the subject. This helps give structure to one's life, providing principles for organizing one's time and energy. The personal pursuit also serves to draw one toward others who share the same interest, and this fosters

a sense of communion and camaraderie with others rather than a sense of alienation.

In contrast, persons with superficial or transient interests experience indecision about what they like and what they should do with their time. They are vulnerable to indiscriminate peer demands. Life outside of obligatory rituals of involvement is more unguided and unfulfilled. This diffuseness undercuts a sense of identity and self-esteem. Under these conditions, inappropriate self-assertive acts occur more readily. Perhaps many acts of vandalism (e.g., writing graffiti) and other forms of antisocial or self-destructive behavior represent poorly channeled drives of self-assertion.

FAILURE WITHOUT HARM

I have shown that avocational interests aid psychological development because they sharpen and extend a person's talents. A sense of competence, of feeling successful at something, lifts the spirit and enhances self-esteem. One knows oneself as good for having mastered a subject.

Yet it is equally important for psychological health to know what it is to fail. A principal value of a hobby or avocational interest is that it provides a testing ground in which one can fail unashamedly. In the world of full-time work, failure is primarily an experience of shame. When one fails at work or in academia, the suffering goes beyond the objective frustration of efforts; social stigmatization arises to complicate matters. The individual experiences self-criticism and/or deprecation by family, peers, or faculty. Guilt and self-contempt often follow. Failure in an avocation or hobby, on the other hand, is more benign. The likely penalty is simply the failure itself, not damaged self-esteem. Self-disparagement is absent. The failure is a turning point for renewed effort, for unashamed seeking of assistance, and for new learning. Experiences of frustration and disappointment are not bound up with self-accusation; experiences of inadequacy do not provoke self-hate. This greater objectivity helps a person know what it is like to fail and how to turn failure to good use without being immobilized by it.

LOSS OF SELF-ABSORPTION

When a person is drawn to an object or activity on its own terms (i.e., on the basis of its inherent demands), personal concerns do not dominate thoughts or monopolize emotions. The interest takes priority and displaces the domination that personal worries or life disappointments tend to exert over us. "Enslavement" to the needs of the subject matter frees the individual from self-absorption. Thus, the grip of long-standing anxieties or current tensions of an unpleasant nature are loosened. This loss of self-consciousness diminishes

anxiety and tension. It also increases the likelihood of finding socially appropriate and compensating gratifications to add perspective to one's mental life.

PREPARATION FOR FUTURE

The social maladies of "burnout" (which supposedly results from the stresses of work) and "retirement blues" (which supposedly result from the stresses of not working) are seldom addressed by examining the quality of a person's avocational development. Instead, we concentrate efforts on the treatment of burnout. We assume that it is an inevitable occupational hazard—that it "goes with the territory." This emphasis reflects an impoverished view of the value of voluntary activities in preparing candidates for entry into the world of work. It overlooks the fact that hobbies prevent the overloading of vocational circuits.

It is negligent to teach people that while it is a mark of maturity to work, it is not equally a mark of maturity to know how to handle leisure. Montaigne's insight that when we learn how to take repose we learn more than one who has taken cities and empires jolts the myth that free time is easier to handle than work time. Senior citizens who have lived competent and productive work lives tell us how they fear the prospect of unstructured time when faced with retirement.

The early stages of formation are a time to help students prepare to deal with the free time of later years. It sets the groundwork for maintaining self-respect and vitality when retirement comes. An enjoyable retirement is as much a personal achievement as any work accomplishment.

ENCOURAGING AVOCATIONS AND HOBBIES

Having made a case for the merits of avocational pursuits, I now turn to some means of encouraging such activities.

Provide Adult Models. Authority figures (e.g., parents, teachers, superiors) who display leisure involvements influence the young to engage in such pursuits. Ironically, adults who are solely absorbed with work sometimes unwittingly help the cause of avocations by providing a negative example through their own life-style.

Avoid Constraining Schedules. In many instances students have insufficient leisure time because their schedule of courses, field work, and clinical experience is so tightly knit. Their preparation for eventual entry into a vocation curtails their opportunity to engage in personal pursuits. More important, it conditions students to see living out a burdensome work ethic as the only viable mode of adult commitment.

Constraining schedules have other negative ef-

fects. They stir up resistance to the whole learning process and dash hopes of ever being able to pursue one's own line of curiosity. Burdensome course loads can so drain energies that the occasional free hour or morning off becomes merely an opportunity to squander time or act out. Attempts to gain release of tension or diversion uninformed by taste or by the demands of a hobby lead youth astray.

Encourage Curiosity and Creativity. In professional programs of preparation there is an understandable emphasis on teaching what is clear and certain. Much teaching consists of exposition and authoritative instruction. But certitude about religious and scientific tenets should not constrict the mind's range of interest. We tend to forget that certitude sometimes operates like a halo, bathing only what falls within a narrow circle of illumination.

Curiosity is the necessary antecedent of new learning. Scholarly academicians who display a derogatory style in dealing with student questions, or with the ineptitude that flows from youthful inexperience, impede the development of curiosity. By contrast, faculty members who disclose curiosity, who show no fear about what is uncertain, who do not use their superior scholarship to monopolize center stage, encourage the natural curiosities of students to surface and seek their natural bent. Administrators who provide resources such as work rooms and materials that allow the pursuit of personal interests in pleasant physical surroundings help channel students' creative impulses toward productive outcomes.

OBSTACLES TO SOUNDNESS

Hobbies are often wrongfully viewed as idle activities. This view exacerbates psychological problems. Students who do not think well of themselves often feel guilty doing something that is not work-productive or that they find personally pleasurable. They orient themselves excessively to serving the needs of others or spend time obsessively toiling over tasks. They are unable to profit from Thomas Aquinas's insight that "not everything that is more difficult is more meritorious."

A major hindrance to a healthy vocational psychology is the custom of separating work and avocation and seeing them as mutually exclusive efforts. Robert Frost's poetic wisdom of uniting vocation and avocation as two eyes united in sight is much healthier than the separatist perspective.

Finally, many persons fail to pursue interests because they are content not to discover much outside of their everyday tasks. Overly identified with their vocation, they are unable to see themselves in terms other than those of their established role. This overdependence on an occupational identity becomes crucial to their sense of self-esteem. Because they cannot consider any other view of themselves, they are confined to a limited ring of experiences. Often, rigid individuals have great difficulty extending, expanding, or enriching their previously defined idea of who they are or what interests them. They foreclose on their own growth.

The obstacles mentioned can be overcome when educators realize that leisure education is not a fad. It is an essential requirement for personal soundness.

INTERESTS EMPOWER

"Secondary" interests cannot be adequately characterized, or dismissed, as frivolous or insignificant. When such interests are shunted aside, we lose. Personal interests are empowering. The human desire to feel competent rather than mediocre, to be engaged in meaningful activity rather than a sham, is met not only through work but through hobbies as well. There is an enhancing interplay between vocation and avocation. To educate solely for work and not for the unfolding experience of pursuing a line of interest reflects shortsightedness. By establishing a milieu of intellectual respectability for an individual's personal interests, we sensibly foster our commitment to human development.

RECOMMENDED READING

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A Framework for Refounding Congregations

*Annelle M. Fitzpatrick, C.S.J., Ph.D., and
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In recent years religious congregations, alarmed at the radical decline in the number of new members, the marked increase in the median age of members, and dwindling resources, have begun to discuss the development of new paradigms for living religious life in the twenty-first century. Most are keenly aware that the age of the apostolic orders is over. Throughout the United States, Canada, and Australia, women religious struggle to refound religious life in a way that assures that its essence remains intact as they respond to the needs of the times. This demands a radical rethinking of the current structure of religious life.

While the cynics among us might look at the present situation and say "religious life is dead," students of church history are conscious that religious life has seemed to teeter on the brink of extinction before yet has survived because it has always been able to embrace the demands of a changing world.

As the twentieth century draws to a close, other models of living a gospel-centered life have already emerged: pious associations, secular institutes, and lay associations of the faithful are manifestations of this phenomenon. Exactly what form religious life will take in the new millennium is not clear, and no one knows if these new models will give rise to a second generation. What is clear, however, is that the "boom years" of traditional religious life are long gone and that the downsizing of religious

congregations and their institutional ministries is inevitable. Patricia Wittberg believes that low entrance rates and the rising median age indicate that many congregations are "facing organizational death." In her book *Creating a Future for Religious Life*, she reflects on the grim statistics:

The total number of women religious in the United States, which had risen over twenty-three percent between 1950 and 1966 (from 147,000 to 181,421), has since fallen forty percent and stands at under 105,000. The median age of women religious is sixty-six; thirty-nine percent are over seventy years old. Worldwide, some 100,000 religious have left their orders. In addition to the loss of their current members, the number of new entrants to both male and female religious congregations has fallen seventy-five percent in the past twenty years. This decline has occurred at the precise time when one would have expected the post-war Baby Boom to supply an even larger number of entrants than usual.

It is not within the scope of this article to examine the various sociological forces that have converged to bring about the impending collapse of many religious congregations. It is our intent, both as religious and as sociologists, to help stimulate more discussion among religious so that the difficult choices that have to be made (by individuals as well as by congregations) are made deliberately and not by default.

REFOUNDING, REFORMING, OR REMODELING?

Much of the literature dealing with the future of religious life centers on a discussion of the concept of refounding. A refounding movement challenges a religious congregation to reflect upon its founder's vision and congregational charisms in light of a new historical age. Refounding implies that after study, discussion, and serious spiritual discernment, members will retain the essential elements of congregational life and discard its superficial components. While the concept of refounding is exciting, achieving consensus concerning the essence of a congregation's spirit and life is often difficult and painful.

In addition, although the term has recently come into popular use among religious, little formal research or theory on refounding is available to guide our steps into the future. Sociologists identify the two most popular forms of social change as revolutionary movements (the total rejection of past social structure and ideology) and reform movements (the modification of social structure and prevailing ideology). We suggest that refounding movements fall somewhere on a continuum between these two types.

While there are few operational definitions available, we suggest that a refounding movement is a process that involves profound structural change, not mere adaptation or modification in institutional policy or procedure. Thus, we define a refounding movement as a collective attempt to discern and retain the spiritual and ministerial focus of the founder while radically altering the institute's social structure. If successful, refounding will create a new social order.

We believe that a refounding movement is distinct from other transformations that many congregations have experienced (e.g., open chapters, secular dress, intercongregational living, personal budgets). We classify these attempts at change as reform movements because they involve adaptations to the existing social structure that require the approval of the institute's governing authorities.

A refounding movement, on the other hand, does not necessarily come from those in authority in the congregation. Rather, like other social movements, it often originates with individuals on the fringes of the group. Sociologists Paul Horton and Chester Hunt note in *Sociology* that those who build social movements are often those who are dissatisfied, restless, rootless, frustrated, or oppressed by the prevailing social structure.

Unfortunately, many frustrated religious have already left their congregations. Others who remain in traditional congregations feel alienated from the prevailing social structures of their congregations. For some, this alienation is a function of the belief that things will never change. For others, it stems from the feeling that things have

changed too quickly and that the congregation has sold out to the liberal ideology that appears to be sweeping every social structure in the United States.

REFLECTING ON THE FUTURE

While it is impossible to consider every individual's vision of what the future direction of a congregation should be, we do believe that it is possible to gauge a congregation's potential and desire for experimenting with new paradigms for living religious life. Thus, we have developed three scenarios for the future of religious life, each leading to a different outcome. Scenarios are often used by teachers, detectives, and futurists to help people explore different options. Scenarios are tools designed to stimulate discussion, instruments that help people push back the boundaries of what exists, in order to imagine what is possible.

For congregations that work with our scenarios, we also provide a questionnaire that touches on five essential categories of religious life (formation, governance, community living, institutional ministries, and experimentation). We believe a group's answers to these questions reflect its willingness to experiment and embrace change in certain areas of communal life.

It is important to remember that we have not based the scenarios on concepts such as "liberal" and "conservative." Rather, our intent has been to develop tools that will help people discuss important issues, and thus encourage congregations and local communities to be proactive (rather than reactive), so that together we can create the future while there is still time.

The three scenarios are presented here in order to stimulate thinking about how they might be played out in the new millennium.

SCENARIO 1

The refounding movement of the late twentieth century never took hold and failed to develop into an alternative model for religious life. Small groups of individuals did experiment with new models of formation, finance, and governance. Often, small local groups, impatient with the lack of response from congregational authorities, moved ahead and experimented with new paradigms. Unfortunately, these new models (e.g., innovative formation programs and financial mechanisms) often fell outside the domain of traditional models. Thus, these experimental models of religious life never received structural or financial support from appropriate congregational authorities and, over time, either lost congregational support or were denied canonical approbation.

Without new members, the median age of religious women in the United States continued to climb. By the year 2010 a handful of octogenarians

were residing in once-flourishing motherhouses that were now in a state of almost total deterioration. The tax-exempt status of the properties was now being challenged in the courts, as these institutions no longer carried out their religious functions. The institutional properties of the congregations (e.g., hospitals, high schools, and colleges) were run by lay boards whose members were seldom trained or educated by the sponsoring congregation. Catholic institutions experienced the same secularization as other institutions that were once founded on religious principles (e.g., Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth universities). The mission focus of the institutions was viewed as a nostalgic relic of the past. Sponsoring congregations continued to give legitimacy to these institutions by allowing them to use the word *Catholic* in their marketing programs. A congregation received a small monthly dividend for "sponsoring" an institution and allowing it to use the name of the congregation in its promotional articles.

SCENARIO 2

In the late 1990s it became apparent that the financial bottom was about to fall out of many traditional orders of religious women. Teaching congregations were among the hardest-hit, as their members were often paid a stipend. Congregations that sponsored health care institutions fared far better because their members received competitive professional salaries with pensions, vesting benefits, and annuity payments.

Since membership and finances were low, diocesan congregations looked to their bishops for financial assistance. However, chancery coffers were empty. The members of the congregations took seriously the mandate to reflect on the difficult choices facing their congregations. Regional planning and sharing of resources between congregations became imperative. No longer was charism the bonding glue of religious women; rather, geographical proximity and shared institutional resources were the incentives for congregations of religious women to collaborate.

Retirement homes for women religious sponsored by the X congregation accepted members from the Y congregation. In return, the Y congregation agreed to pool financial assets with X in order to purchase high-yield municipal bonds. Both groups benefited from the decision to pool assets, as the rate of return was doubled.

The initial attempts at collaboration for survival proved so successful that religious women began to dream again and to forge new ministries. A sense of enthusiasm engulfed religious women as they opened their doors to associates and affiliates of the congregation. No longer did dinner conversation revolve around downsizing and closing or selling properties. Rather, members of neighboring con-

Refounding is a process that involves profound structural change, not mere adaptation or modification

gregations came together to pool resources so that properties (e.g., motherhouse, schools, convents) vacated by one congregation were offered to other religious women for new ministries (e.g., permanent housing for the homeless or cooperative markets where minority women could learn new skills and sell their products). For the first time in a long time one comprehended the words of Isaiah as if the prophet had spoken directly to women religious in the late twentieth century: "They shall restore these ancient ruins. They will rebuild the ancient walls which have lain waste for generations."

SCENARIO 3

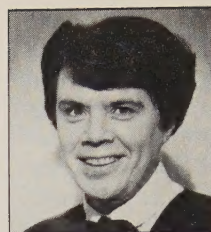
The refounding movement of the late 1990s generated new paradigms for living religious life in the new millennium. Conscious that by the year 2010 there would be few women religious to witness the evangelical councils in the twenty-first century, congregations of women examined their ministries and life-styles in response to the signs of the times and brought about sweeping changes in the areas of finance, formation, and governance.

Religious congregations carefully scrutinized their institutional ministries. Institutions that were Catholic in name only were closed or sold to other sponsors. Institutions that clearly witnessed to the charism and mission of the congregations were continued and supported. Committed lay leaders who shared a sense of mission and gospel values (e.g., concern for the poor, commitment to the principles of social justice, and a deep faith commitment) were also identified. These individuals were invited to participate in a leadership development program developed and funded by

the congregation. They received formal training in the spirituality and charism of the congregation, as well as an opportunity to deepen their prayer life.

Intentional communities sprang up and developed new ways of finance, formation, and government. These communities were sometimes composed of people who made a temporary commitment to give their time, energy, and financial resources to the ministry of the local community. New members who made a perpetual commitment often continued to live with the intentional community that first attracted them to religious life.

Salaries were pooled by intentional communities to support their local ministries. These ministries (e.g., to homeless people, runaway children, pregnant women, AIDS babies) were often the glue that bound intentional communities. Freed from the cumbersome bureaucracy that had marked the previous decision-making process, women religious were viewed as being on the cutting edge of meeting societal needs.



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A questionnaire prepared by the authors as a guide for reflection on the three scenarios may be obtained by writing to them or to the editorial offices of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Music Designed to Reduce Stress

A four-song album of synthesizer music titled "Heart Zones," recorded by Doc Lew Childre, is currently appearing as regularly on *Billboard* magazine's Top Adult Alternative chart as F. Scott Peck's *A Road Less Traveled* does on the *New York Times* list of best-selling paperbacks. What is exceptional about this New Age disc is the fact that the music was scientifically created to achieve a specific psychological effect in its listeners—namely, the reduction of stress.

According to Childre, "Heart Zones" is a "pioneer in the area of special music for specific needs. The music is designed as an energy booster that promotes clarity while facilitating mental and emotional balance." Reportedly, the score for the album was tested over two years on a group of 75 listeners to determine whether the desired results were attained.

Garret Condon, a staff writer for the *Hartford Courant*, says, "What the researchers claim to have come upon are specific musical rhythms and phrases that produce predictable psychological and physiological effects in most listeners." He explains, "Such work, if scientifically repeatable, would have some impact on the world of music therapy, where creating, playing, and listening to music is used to help patients with a host of mental and emotional problems."

Today there are thousands of music therapists working in hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, and drug programs. The National Association for Music Therapy Inc. has more than 3,200 members nation-

wide. But the idea of using music for healing purposes goes back at least as far as ancient Greece. There, Plato and Aristotle both believed that certain kinds of music evoked specific psychological responses. They disagreed, however, about which tunes created which responses. Later, in his 1797 *Memoires*, composer André Grétry gave psychological characterizations to 14 musical keys. Nikolai Andreyevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) related colors to 11 keys, and so did fellow Russian Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915). But, as Condon has observed, "They fully agreed on only one key" (D major is yellow).

Musician-psychologist Dr. James Kellaris, at the University of Cincinnati, says he thinks the claim by the "Heart Zones" producers is possible, but he is skeptical of studies that are not published in academic journals (Childre has thus far not submitted his research for scientific review). However, the research continues, and Childre's institute in Boulder Creek, California, is at the present time offering a training program to AIDS patients to see if his music can boost the effectiveness of their immune systems.

It might be interesting to keep a quizzical eye (and ear) on Childre's studies if you are in search of a soothing and effective way to escape the emotional wear-and-tear that comes from living in a time and circumstances loaded with potential for causing dehumanizing stress.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Religious Institute in Transition: The Story of Three General Chapters, by Luke Salm. Romeoville, Illinois: Christian Brothers Publications, 1992. 270 pp. \$9.95.

With the approaching 1994 synod in Rome on the religious life, careful theological and historical reflection on the last three decades of renewal will be necessary for the whole church, not merely for religious. Indeed, such reflection will be particularly important for Episcopal Conference delegations that do not include religious, as is the case with the U.S. delegation. *A Religious Institute in Transition*, written by the well-known theologian Luke Salm, will be among the important contributions to this reflection.

When an institution instructs organizations within it to send their best and brightest leaders to research, restructure, and renew themselves precisely according to their historical and cultural differences, and then twenty years later invites them to have the results evaluated by "essential elements," one would expect considerable dialogue and interplay. In the providence of God, this is exactly the scenario that was set up by the Second Vatican Council when religious communities were told to renew themselves in the light of the charisma of their founders, the gospel, and the signs of the times. This book recounts the specific experiences of one community, the De La Salle Christian Brothers, through the story of their chapters of 1966–67, 1976, and 1986. Yet the theological and historical resources of the author make the story just as much

an ecclesiological reflection against the larger tapestry of the spiritual renewal of the church and its structures.

The fact that the De La Salle Christian Brothers are the largest community of lay religious men, and one that bridges the concerns of men's communities (the majority of which are clerical) and women's communities, is significant in understanding its importance. Indeed, when the episcopal and curial elements of the Catholic church begin to see more clearly the evangelical liberty that exists for the adaptation of juridical structures, the developments of lay communities will become a particularly important resource. This study is particularly helpful in understanding the developments of subsidiarity, internationalization and inculturation, identity formation, the shift in spirituality toward a more person- and community-centered norm from a more juridical past, and the specifically American cultural contributions to a global community that was, in this case, predominantly French in ethos.

Obviously, the Second Vatican Council is the source of inspiration for Salm's book and the events recounted in it. The first of the chapters covered (that of 1966–67) became the mandated chapter of renewal only upon reflection and request. The euphoria of the Council, the competence of the delegates (including those from the United States), and the decision to break the chapter into two sessions meant that the volume of renewal was tremendous. It included not only the rewriting of the Rule and the production of *Declaration: The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today*, but also the drafting of ten other documents and a book of acts—all for the renewal of every aspect of the life of the community and its apostolates. It would be no surprise that the 1976 gathering found the community polarized along cultural, ideological, and theological lines.

The De La Salle Christian Brothers' assimilation of enormous changes—particularly considering that their community specializes in primary and secondary education—appears in retrospect to have been relatively successful compared with that of other elements of the church as a whole. One will need to read French and Spanish accounts to balance the picture, of course; Salm, a participant and leader in all three of the De La Salle chapters, offers an overall picture with emphasis on the U.S. contribution. As for the 1976 and 1986 chapters, one will also need to attend to third-world views, especially those of Latin Americans, around such issues as the role of the option for the poor in De La Salle's charism.

The focus of the final (1986) chapter was on the Rule, but the heart of Salm's analysis is a reflection on the integration of the past thirty-plus years of history in the church and the De La Salle institute, and its implications for the future. Others will undoubtedly emphasize different dimensions of the Holy Spirit's action in the life of this community and of the church. However, it is only the sort of detailed and faithful research done by Salm that will lay the foundation for moving ahead with confidence and vigor in the vision of the Council and the spiritual renewal of the whole church.

This book is well-written and edited. It is regrettable only that a publisher was not chosen who would provide a wider market and higher profile for this important work on the history of the Catholic church and the contribution of American culture to international debates. The various relationships of the institute of the De La Salle Christian Brothers and the Roman Curia are treated sensitively but honestly. Salm's work will be useful in comparison with analyses of other congregations and their development during the same period.

—Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C.

In the Presence of the Wise and Gentle Christ, by James McNamara. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1993. 156 pp. \$9.95.

Readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT know James McNamara's work. This diocesan priest from Rockville Center, New York, has extensive experience with "real people" and a special gift for communicating the gospel message of hope and trust to them.

The first part of this short book consists of fourteen chapters, each beginning with a gospel passage, which is then reflected on. Each chapter allows one to see a situation from multiple points of view and speculates on the possible feelings or reactions of the participants. Over the course of the chapters, virtually all human burdens or problems are alluded to directly or indirectly. An invitation is given to ponder them with the "wise and gentle Christ" of the title. The reflections encourage active participation by the reader. The author is careful to suggest consultation, spiritual direction, or counseling when a neuralgic point is touched.

The second part of the book is a series of eight reflections on the life of Francis of Assisi. Francis is, of course, one of the saints most appealing to our contemporaries, and the reflections build on this affinity.

The book lives up to its title. It can be helpful, I think, to people who make religion an important part of their lives but who are worried about some major problem or challenge. It should also be helpful to people who have become marginalized from organized religion but who may be unusually open to the message in times of stress.

—Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.